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SCENES FROM EURIPIDES

THE ELECTRA

SCENES

FROM

EURIPIDES

Rugby Edition

BY A. SIDGWICK, M.A.

TUTOR OF CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE, OXFORD, LATE ASSISTANT MASTER IN RUGBY SCHOOL, AND FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

THE ELECTRA

NEW EDITION

RIVINGTONS

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Κλυταιμνήστρα, queen of Argos.

Ὀρέστης, son of Agamemnon and Clytaemnestra.

Ἠλέκτρα, his sister.

Αὐτουργός ('a husbandman'), married to Electra.

Πρεσβύς ('old man'), servant of Electra, who had tended her as a child.

Ἄγγελος ('a messenger').

Πυλάδης, the friend of Orestes, who appears on the stage, but does not speak.

Chorus of Argive maidens, singing usually in the orchestra below the stage, but mounting the stage itself when the action requires it.

The scene is a rustic cottage in Argolis, and is the same all through the play.

PREFACE.

THE ELECTRA is one of the strongest and most instructive examples of the *realism* of EURIPIDES. His object was to excite interest, not by distant grandeur like AESCHYLUS, nor by ideals however touching and poetic like SOPHOCLES, but by bringing real men and women on the stage, with real human passions and feelings, as his countrymen saw them every day in Athens. The strong side of this realism is clearly the 'touch of nature;' the weak side is the danger of its losing all effect by becoming commonplace and undignified. This play has passages which illustrate both tendencies.

There are many delicate touches of natural feeling, many striking displays of passion; the recognition of ORESTES, though inferior to that in the IPHIGENIA, is full of beauties; and the curse of AEGISTHUS is very finely written. On the other hand, there is something repulsive in the incongruity of ELECTRA being married to a farm labourer; all the characters, from time to time, talk in a commonplace strain; and the satire on AESCHYLUS in the fourth scene is both unworthy and irrelevant. But, on the whole, it certainly has been unduly scorned by the critics.

The plot of the play is as follows:—

CLYTAEMNESTRA, having treacherously murdered her husband, AGAMEMNON, on his return from Troy, has married her lover AEGISTHUS, and rules Argolis from the palace at Mycenae. ORESTES is in foreign lands; and ELECTRA, whose love for her father might be awkward, is safely married to a poor but noble-minded tiller of the soil. All seems well for her.

But ORESTES returns, bidden by the Delphic oracle to slay

her. He and PYLADES reach Argolis (and the cottage of ELECTRA, though they know it not,) at daybreak. Here the play opens with ORESTES' short address to PYLADES, announcing his night-visit to his father's tomb, and his purpose. [Scene 1.]

ELECTRA discovers the two travellers lurking near her cottage, and at first she takes them for thieves. ORESTES, however, informs her that he brings news of her brother, and inquires after her. She joyfully tells him all her case, and plans of vengeance, which he promises to report. [Scene 2.]

The husband of ELECTRA returns, and hearing who the strangers are, courteously invites them in. ORESTES warmly admires virtue in such humble rank. [Scene 3.]

An old servant of the family arrives with some provisions, and tells her that some one has been visiting her father's tomb. Presently ORESTES and PYLADES come in, and the old man recognises the former. [Scene 4.]

The brother and sister now contrive their plot. [Scene 5.]

AEGISTHUS is slain by ORESTES under pretence of joining in the sacrifice which the former is celebrating. [Scene 6.]

ORESTES returns to his sister with the body, having revealed his real name to the Argives. ELECTRA utters her famous curse against the dead man. [Scene 7.]

CLYTAEMNESTRA, in answer to an appeal from ELECTRA, who asks her to come as she has recently given birth to a child, visits the cottage in state. There (behind the scenes) she is murdered, and the scene is then shifted, showing the brother and sister standing over the corpses of the guilty pair. [Scene 8.]

SCENE I.

THE RETURN OF ORESTES.

The cottage where ELECTRA *and her husband live, in a rural district of Argolis. The stream Inachus is seen in the background, and over the hills behind the day is breaking. The ground slopes steeply down with rude steps at the sides, from the higher level of the stage to the lower level of the orchestra.*

Enter ORESTES *and* PYLADES, *girt with swords, in the guise of way-worn travellers, with luggage on their backs. They stop as they are approaching the cottage and put down their baggage, and* ORESTES *turns to his friend and says:—*

OP. Πυλάδη, σὲ γὰρ δὴ πρῶτον ἀνθρώπων ἐγὼ
πιστὸν νομίζω καὶ φίλον ξένον τ' ἐμοί·
μόνος δ' Ὀρέστην τόνδ' ἐθαύμαζες φίλων,
πράσσουθ' ἃ πράσσω δεῖν' ὑπ' Αἰγίσθου παθών,
ὅς μου κατέκτα πατέρα χὴ πανώλεθρος 5
μήτηρ. ἀφῖγμαι δ' ἐκ θεοῦ μυστηρίων
Ἀργεῖον οὖδας, οὐδενὸς ξυνειδότος,
[*fiercely*] φόνον φονεῦσι πατρὸς ἀλλάξων ἐμοῦ.
νυκτὸς δὲ τῆσδε πρὸς τάφον μολὼν πατρὸς
δάκρυά τ' ἔδωκα καὶ κόμης ἀπηρξάμην 10
πυρᾷ τ' ἐπέσφαξ' αἷμα μηλείου φόνου
λαθὼν τυράννους οἳ κρατοῦσι τῆσδε γῆς.
καὶ τειχέων μὲν ἐντὸς οὐ βαίνω πόδα,

ὀνοῖν δ' ἅμιλλαν ξυντιθεὶς ἀφικόμην
πρὸς τέρμονας γῆς τῆσδ', ἵν' ἐκβάλω ποδὶ 15
ἄλλην ἐπ' αἶαν, εἴ μέ τις γνοίη σκοπῶν
ζητοῦντ' ἀδελφήν, (φασὶ γάρ νιν ἐν γάμοις
ζευχθεῖσαν οἰκεῖν, οὐδὲ παρθένον μένειν,)
ὡς συγγένωμαι καὶ φόνου συνεργάτιν
λιβὼν τά γ' εἴσω τειχέων σαφῶς μάθω. 20
[*gazing at the sunrise in the east*]
νῦν οὖν, Ἕως γὰρ λευκὺν ὄμμ' ἀναίρεται,
ἐξω τρίβου τοῦδ' ἴχνος ἀλλαξώμεθα.
ἢ γάρ τις ἀροτὴρ ἤ τις οἰκέτις γυνὴ
φανήσεται νῷν, ἥντιν' ἱστορήσομεν
εἰ τούσδε ναίει σύγγονος τόπους ἐμή. 25
[*They retire aside out of the path, and sit down.*]

SCENE II.

ORESTES AND ELECTRA.

The same. ORESTES *and* PYLADES *seated at a little distance from the path, not clearly in view.*

The CHORUS *of Argeian maidens are in the orchestra, and* ELECTRA *is singing a song to them from the stage about herself and her sorrows. Suddenly she chances to catch sight of* ORESTES *and* PYLADES, *who from their retired spot are listening intently to her song.*

ELECTRA *is dressed in the commonest and coarsest garb of a labourer's wife.*

She starts back; then recovering herself, she says, in a (hurried) tone of fear, pointing at the two figures:—

ΗΛ. οἴμοι, γυναῖκες· ἐξέβην θρηνημάτων·
ξένοι τιὲς παρ' οἶκον οἵδ' ἐφεστίους
εὐνὰς ἔχοντες ἐξανίστανται λόχου·
φυγῇ, σὺ μὲν κατ' οἶμον, ἐς δόμους δ' ἐγώ,
φῶτας κακούργους ἐξαλύξωμεν ποδί. 30

[*she rushes off toward the cottage, but* ORESTES *and* PYLADES *intercept her*]

ΟΡ. μέν', ὦ τάλαινα· μὴ τρέσῃς ἐμήν χέρα.

ΗΛ. ὦ Φοῖβ' Ἄπολλον, προσπίτνω σε μὴ θανεῖν.

[*falling on her knees*]

ΟΡ. ἄλλους κτάνοιμ' ἂν μᾶλλον ἐχθίους σέθεν.

ΗΛ. [*struggling*] ἄπελθε, μὴ ψαῦ' ὧν σε μὴ ψαύειν χρεών.

ΟΡ. οὐκ ἔσθ' ὅτου θίγοιμ' ἂν ἐνδικώτερον. 35

ΗΛ. [*pointing to his sword*]
καὶ πῶς ξιφήρης πρὸς δόμοις λοχᾷς ἐμέ;
ΟΡ. μείνασ' ἄκουσον, καὶ τάχ' οὐκ ἄλλως ἐρεῖς.
ΗΛ. [*humbly*] ἕστηκα· πάντως δ' εἰμὶ σή· κρείσσων γὰρ εἶ.
ΟΡ. [*releasing her*] ἥκω φέρων σοι σοῦ κασιγνήτου λόγους.
ΗΛ. [*in delight*] ὦ φίλτατ', ἆρα ζῶντος, ἢ τεθνηκότος; 40
ΟΡ. ζῇ· πρῶτα γάρ σοι τἀγάθ' ἀγγέλλειν θέλω.
ΗΛ. [*passionately joyful*]
εὐδαιμονοίης, μισθὸν ἡδίστων λόγων.
ΟΡ. κοινῇ δίδωμι τοῦτο νῷν ἀμφοῖν ἔχειν.
ΗΛ. λόγον δὲ δὴ τιν' ἦλθες ἐκ κείνου φέρων;
ΟΡ. εἰ ζῇς, ὅπως τε ζῶσα συμφορᾶς ἔχεις. 45
ΗΛ. οὔκουν ὁρᾷς μου πρῶτον ὡς ξηρὸν δέμας;
ΟΡ. [*with pity*] λύπαις γε συντετηκός, ὥστε με στένειν.
ΗΛ. καὶ κρᾶτα πλόκαμόν τ' ἐσκυθισμένον ξυρῷ.
ΟΡ. δάκνει σ' ἀδελφὸς ὅ τε θανὼν ἴσως πατήρ;
ΗΛ. οἴμοι, τί γάρ μοι τῶνδέ γ' ἐστὶ φίλτερον; 50
ΟΡ. [*sympathetically*]
φεῦ φεῦ· τί δαὶ σὺ σῷ κασιγνήτῳ δοκεῖς;
ΗΛ. ἀπὼν ἐκεῖνος, οὐ παρὼν ἡμῖν φίλος.
ΟΡ. [*glancing at the cottage*]
ἐκ τοῦ δὲ ναίεις ἐνθάδ' ἄστεως ἑκάς;
ΗΛ. ἐγημάμεσθ', ὦ ξεῖνε, θανάσιμον γάμον.
ΟΡ. [*sighing*]
ᾤμωξ' ἀδελφὸν σόν. Μυκηναίων τινί; 55
ΗΛ. οὐχ ὡς πατήρ μ' ἤλπιζεν ἐκδώσειν ποτέ.
ΟΡ. εἶφ', ὡς ἀκούσας σῷ κασιγνήτῳ λέγω.
ΗΛ. ἐν τοῖσδ' ἐκείνου τηλορὸς ναίω δόμοις.

ΟΡ. [*with a touch of contempt*]
σκαφεύς τις ἢ βουφορβὸς ἄξιος δόμων.
ΗΛ. πένης ἀνὴρ γενναῖος ἔς τέ μ' εὐσεβής. 60
ΟΡ. μήτηρ δέ σ' ἡ τεκοῦσα ταῦτ' ἠνέσχετο;
ΗΛ. [*sadly*] γυναῖκες ἀνδρῶν, ὦ ξέν', οὐ παίδων, φίλαι.
ΟΡ. τίνος δέ σ' οὕνεχ' ὕβρισ' Αἴγισθος τάδε;
ΗΛ. τεκεῖν μ' ἐβούλετ' ἀσθενῆ, τοιῷδε δούς.
ΟΡ. ὡς παῖδα δῆθεν μὴ τέκοις ποινάτορα; 65
ΗΛ. [*vindictively*] τοιαῦτ' ἐβούλευσ', ὧν ἐμοὶ δοίη δίκην.
ΟΡ. τί δῆτ' Ὀρέστης πρὸς τάδ', Ἄργος ἦν μόλῃ;
ΗΛ. [*surprised*]
ἤρου τόδ'; αἰσχρόν γ' εἶπας· οὐ γὰρ νῦν ἀκμή;
ΟΡ. ἐλθὼν δὲ δὴ πῶς φονέας ἂν κτάνοι πατρός;
ΗΛ. [*decisively*]
τολμῶν, ὑπ' ἐχθρῶν οἵ' ἐτολμήθη πατήρ. 70
ΟΡ. ἦ καὶ μετ' αὐτοῦ μητέρ' ἂν τλαίης κτανεῖν;
ΗΛ. ταὐτῷ γε πελέκει τῷ πατὴρ ἀπώλετο.
ΟΡ. [*eagerly*] λέγω τάδ' αὐτῷ, καὶ βέβαια τἀπὸ σοῦ;
ΗΛ. θάνοιμι μητρὸς αἷμ' ἐπισφάξασ' ἐμῆς.
ΟΡ. φεῦ· [*controlling his excitement*]
εἴθ' ἦν Ὀρέστης πλησίον κλύων τάδε. 75
ΗΛ. ἀλλ', ὦ ξέν', οὐ γνοίην ἂν εἰσιδοῦσά νιν.
ΟΡ. νέα γὰρ, οὐδὲν θαῦμ', ἀπεζεύχθης νέου.
ΗΛ. εἷς ἂν μόνος νιν τῶν ἐμῶν γνοίη φίλων.
ΟΡ. ἆρ' ὃν λέγουσιν αὐτὸν ἐκκλέψαι φόνου;
ΗΛ. πατρός γε παιδαγωγὸς ἀρχαῖος γέρων. 80
ΟΡ. ὁ κατθανὼν δὲ σὸς πατὴρ τύμβου κυρεῖ;
ΗΛ. [*darkly*] ἔκυρσεν ὡς ἔκυρσεν, ἐκβληθεὶς δόμων.

ΟΡ. [*in horror*] οἴμοι, τόδ' οἷον εἶπας.
[*controlling himself*] αἴσθησις γὰρ οὖν
κἀκ τῶν θυραίων πημάτων δάκνει βροτούς.
λέξον δ', ἵν' εἰδὼς σῷ κασιγνήτῳ φέρω 85
λόγους ἀτερπεῖς, ἀλλ' ἀναγκαίους κλύειν.

ΠΛ. [*resolved*] λέγοιμ' ἄν, εἰ χρή. χρὴ δὲ πρὸς φίλον λέγειν
τύχας βαρείας τὰς ἐμὰς κἀμοῦ πατρός.
ἐπεὶ δὲ κινεῖς μῦθον, ἱκετεύω, ξένε,
ἄγγελλ' Ὀρέστῃ τἀμὰ κἀκείνου κακά, 90
[*with a piteous glance down at her dress*]
πρῶτον μὲν οἵοις ἐν πέπλοις αὐλίζομαι,
πίνῳ θ' ὅσῳ βέβριθ', ὑπὸ στέγαισί τε
οἵαισι ναίω βασιλικῶν ἐκ δωμάτων,
αὐτὴ μὲν ἐκμοχθοῦσα κερκίσιν πέπλους,
ἢ γυμνὸν ἔξω σῶμα καὶ στερήσομαι, 95
αὐτὴ δὲ πηγὰς ποταμίους φορουμένη,
ἀνέορτος ἱρῶν καὶ χορῶν τητωμένη.
[*scornfully*] μήτηρ δ' ἐμὴ Φρυγίοισιν ἐν σκυλεύμασι
θρόνῳ κάθηται, πρὸς δ' ἕδρας Ἀσιάτιδες
δμωαὶ στατίζουσ', ἃς ἔπερσ' ἐμὸς πατήρ, 100
Ἰδαῖα φάρη χρυσέαις ἐζευγμέναι
πόρπαισιν.
[*with indignant solemnity*] αἷμα δ' ἔτι πατρὸς κατὰ στέγας
μέλαν σέσηπεν· ὃς δ' ἐκεῖνον ἔκτανεν,
ἐς ταὐτὰ βαίνων ἅρματ' ἐκφοιτᾷ πατρί,
καὶ σκῆπτρ', ἐν οἷς Ἕλλησιν ἐστρατηλάτει, 105
μιαιφόνοισι χερσὶ γαυροῦται λαβών.
Ἀγαμέμνονος δὲ τύμβος ἠτιμασμένος,

οὔπω χοάς ποτ' οὐδὲ κλῶνα μυρσίνης
ἔλαβε, πυρὰ δὲ χέρσος ἀγλαϊσμάτων.
μέθῃ δὲ βρεχθεὶς τῆς ἐμῆς μητρὸς πόσις, 110
[*bitterly*] ὁ κλεινός, ὡς λέγουσιν, ἐνθρώσκει τάφῳ,
πέτροις τε λεύει μνῆμα λάϊνον πατρός,
καὶ τοῦτο τολμᾷ τοὔπος εἰς ἡμᾶς λέγειν·
ποῦ παῖς Ὀρέστης; ἆρά σοι τύμβῳ καλῶς
παρὼν ἀμύνει; ταῦτ' ἀπὼν ὑβρίζεται. 115
[*pausing at the climax of her passion and indignation; then turning to* ORESTES, *earnestly*]
ἀλλ', ὦ ξέν', ἱκετεύω σ', ἀπάγγειλον τάδε.
[*clasping her hands*]
πολλοὶ δ' ἐπιστέλλουσιν, ἑρμηνεὺς δ' ἐγώ,
αἱ χεῖρες, ἡ γλῶσσ', ἡ ταλαίπωρός τε φρὴν
κάρα τ' ἐμὸν ζυρῆκες ὅ τ' ἐκείνου τεκών.
αἰσχρόν γάρ, εἰ πατὴρ μὲν ἐξεῖλεν Φρύγας, 120
ὁ δ' ἄνδρ' ἕν' εἷς ὢν οὐ δυνήσεται κτανεῖν,
νέος πεφυκὼς κἀξ ἀμείνονος πατρός.
[*she turns to him in eager appeal.*]

SCENE III.

THE HUSBANDMAN.

ELECTRA *is standing before* ORESTES *and* PYLADES *with clasped hands and eager air of entreaty.* ORESTES *is moved, but silent.*

Suddenly enter the husbandman (to whom ELECTRA *is married). When he catches sight of the group he stops short, rather surprised and hurt.*

Then he turns to ELECTRA *and says, with an injured air, pointing at* ORESTES *and* PYLADES:—

ΑΥ. ἔα· τίνας τούσδ' ἐν πύλαις ὁρῶ ξένους;
τίνος δ' ἕκατι τάσδ' ἐπ' ἀγραύλους πύλας
προσῆλθον; ἢ 'μοῦ δεόμενοι; γυναικί τοι 125
αἰσχρὸν μετ' ἀνδρῶν ἑστάναι νεανιῶν.

ΗΛ. [*sweetly*] ὦ φίλτατ', εἰς ὕποπτα μὴ μόλῃς ἐμοί.
τὸν ὄντα δ' εἴσει μῦθον· οἵδε γὰρ ξένοι
ἥκουσ' Ὀρέστου πρός με κήρυκες λόγων.
[*turning to* ORESTES *and* PYLADES]
ἀλλ', ὦ ξένοι, σύγγνωτε τοῖς εἰρημένοις. 130

ΑΥ. [*surprised*] τί φασίν; ἀνὴρ ἔστι καὶ λεύσσει φάος;

ΗΛ. ἔστιν λόγῳ γοῦν· φασὶ δ' οὐκ ἄπιστ' ἐμοί.

ΑΥ. ἦ καί τι πατρὸς σῶν τε μέμνηται κακῶν;

ΗΛ. ἐν ἐλπίσιν ταῦτ'· ἀσθενὴς φεύγων ἀνήρ.

ΑΥ. ἦλθον δ' Ὀρέστου τίν' ἀγορεύοντες λόγον; 135

ΗΛ. σκοποὺς ἔπεμψε τούσδε τῶν ἐμῶν κακῶν.

ΑΥ. οὐκοῦν τὰ μὲν λεύσσουσι, τὰ δὲ σύ που λέγεις.

ΗΛ. ἴσασιν, οὐδὲν τῶνδ' ἔχουσιν ἐνδεές.

ΑΥ. [*heartily*] οὐκοῦν πάλαι χρῆν τοῖσδ' ἀνεπτύχθαι πύλας.

[*to* ORESTES *and* PYLADES]

χωρεῖτ' ἐς οἴκους· ἀντὶ γὰρ χρηστῶν λόγων 140

ξενίων κυρήσεθ', οἷ' ἐμὸς κεύθει δόμος.

[*to the attendants in the house*]

αἴρεσθ', ὀπαδοί, τῶνδ' ἔσω τεύχη δόμων·

[*to* ORESTES *and* PYLADES]

καὶ μηδὲν ἀντείπητε, παρὰ φίλου φίλοι

μολόντες ἀνδρός· καὶ γὰρ εἰ πένης ἔφυν,

οὔτοι τό γ' ἦθος δυσγενὲς παρέξομαι. 145

[*attendants come out and take in the luggage*]

ΟΡ. [*after a pause, during which he gazes admiringly at the Husbandman as he retreats into the cottage*] φεῦ·

οὐκ ἔστ' ἀκριβὲς οὐδὲν εἰς εὐανδρίαν·

ἔχουσι γὰρ ταραγμὸν αἱ φύσεις βροτῶν.

ἤδη γὰρ εἶδον ἄνδρα γενναῖον πατρὸς

τὸ μηδὲν ὄντα, χρηστά τ' ἐκ κακῶν τέκνα,

λιμόν τ' ἐν ἀνδρὸς πλουσίου φρονήματι, 150

γνώμην τε μεγάλην ἐν πένητι σώματι.

[*reflecting*] πῶς οὖν τις αὐτὰ διαλαβὼν ὀρθῶς κρινεῖ;

πλούτῳ; [*shaking his head*] πονηρῷ τἄρα χρήσεται κριτῇ·

ἢ τοῖς ἔχουσι μηδέν; [*doubtfully*] ἀλλ' ἔχει νόσον

πενία, διδάσκει δ' ἄνδρα τῇ χρείᾳ κακόν. 155

ἀλλ' εἰς ὅπλ' ἔλθω; τίς δὲ πρὸς λόγχην βλέπων

μάρτυς γένοιτ' ἂν ὅστις ἐστὶν ἀγαθός;

κράτιστον εἰκῇ ταῦτ' ἐᾶν ἀφειμένα.

οὗτος γὰρ ἀνὴρ οὔτ' ἐν Ἀργείοις μέγας

οὔτ' αὖ δοκήσει δωμάτων ὠγκωμένος, 160
ἐν τοῖς δὲ πολλοῖς ὤν, ἄριστος ηὑρέθη.
[*with indignation and contempt*]
οὐ μὴ 'φρονήσεθ', οἳ κενῶν δοξασμάτων
πλήρεις πλαναῶσθε, τῇ δ' ὁμιλίᾳ βροτοὺς
κρινεῖτε καὶ τοῖς ἤθεσιν τοὺς εὐγενεῖς;
οἱ γὰρ τοιοῦτοι τὰς πόλεις οἰκοῦσιν εὖ 165
καὶ δώμαθ', αἱ δὲ σάρκες αἱ κεναὶ φρενῶν
ἀγάλματ' ἀγορᾶς εἰσίν. οὐδὲ γὰρ δόρυ
μᾶλλον βραχίων σθεναρὸς ἀσθενοῦς μένει·
ἐν τῇ φύσει δὲ τοῦτο κἀν εὐψυχίᾳ.
[*after a pause, turning to* ELECTRA]
αἰνῶ μὲν οὖν τοῦδ' ἀνδρὸς ἐσδοχὰς δόμων· 170
ἐβουλόμην δ' ἄν, εἰ κασίγνητός με σὸς
εἰς εὐτυχοῦντας ἦγεν εὐτυχῶν δόμους.
ἴσως δ' ἂν ἔλθοι· Λοξίου γὰρ ἔμπεδοι
χρησμοί, βροτῶν δὲ μαντικὴν χαίρειν ἐῶ.

[ELECTRA *leads the way into the cottage;* ORESTES *and* PYLADES *follow.*]

SCENE IV.

THE RECOGNITION.

The stage is empty. An old man in a tattered garment appears in the orchestra, approaching the steps which lead up to the stage. He carries a staff, and a basket of provisions, containing meat, cheeses, and wine.

He looks about for ELECTRA, *and then proceeds slowly to mount the steps.*

ΠΡ. ποῦ ποῦ νεᾶνις πότνι' ἐμὴ δέσποινά τε, 175
'Αγαμέμνονος παῖς, ἥν ποτ' ἐξέθρεψ' ἐγώ;
[*resting a moment*]
ὡς πρόσβασιν τῶνδ' ὀρθίαν οἴκων ἔχει
ῥυσῷ γέροντι τῷδε προσβῆναι ποδί.
ὅμως δὲ πρός γε τοὺς φίλους ἐξελκτέον
διπλῆν ἄκανθαν καὶ παλίρροπον γόνυ. 180

[*He climbs resolutely but wearily to the top, and meets* ELECTRA *coming out of the cottage.*]

ὦ θύγατερ, ἄρτι γάρ σε πρὸς δόμοις ὁρῶ,
ἥκω φέρων σοι ταῦτα, τοῖς ξένοις βοράν.
[*he gives her the cheeses, wine, &c.*]
[*wiping his eyes with his tattered robe*]
ἐγὼ δὲ τρύχει τῷδ' ἐμῶν πέπλων κόρας
δακρύοισι τέγξας ἐξομόρξασθαι θέλω.

ΗΛ. [*in a tone of pity*]
τί δ', ὦ γεραιέ, διάβροχον τόδ' ὄμμ' ἔχεις; 185
μῶν τἀμὰ διὰ χρόνου σ' ἀνέμνησεν κακά;

ἢ τὰς Ὀρέστου τλήμονας φυγὰς στένεις
καὶ πατέρα τὸν ἐμόν, ὅν ποτ' ἐν χεροῖν ἔχων
ἀνόνητ' ἔθρεψας σοί τε καὶ τοῖς σοῖς φίλοις;

ΠΡ. [*sadly*]
ἀνόνητθ'· ὅμως δ' οὖν τοῦτό γ' οὐκ ἠνεσχόμην. 190
ἦλθον γὰρ αὐτοῦ πρὸς τάφον, πάρεργ' ὁδοῦ,
καὶ προσπεσὼν ἔκλαυσ', ἐρημίας τυχών,
σπονδάς τε, λύσας ἀσκὸν ὃν φέρω ξένοις,
ἔσπεισα, τύμβῳ δ' ἀμφέθηκα μυρσίνας.
πυρᾶς δ' ἐπ' αὐτῆς οἶν μελάγχιμον πόκῳ 195
σφάγιον ἐσεῖδον αἷμά τ' οὐ πάλαι χυθὲν
ξανθῆς τε χαίτης βοστρύχους κεκαρμένους.
κἀθαύμασ', ὦ παῖ, τίς ποτ' ἀνθρώπων ἔτλη
πρὸς τύμβον ἐλθεῖν· οὐ γὰρ Ἀργείων γέ τις.
[*eagerly*]
ἀλλ' ἦλθ' ἴσως που σὸς κασίγνητος λάθρα, 200
μολὼν δ' ἐθαύμασ' ἄθλιον τύμβον πατρός.
[*pulling from his garment a lock of hair*]
σκέψαι δὲ χαίτην, προστιθεῖσα σῇ κόμῃ,
εἰ χρῶμα ταὐτὸ κουρίμης ἔσται τριχός.
φιλεῖ γὰρ, αἷμα ταὐτὸν οἷς ἂν ᾖ πατρός,
τὰ πόλλ' ὅμοια σώματος πεφυκέναι. 205

ΗΛ. [*surprised, and rather scornful*]
οὐκ ἄξι' ἀνδρός, ὦ γέρον, σοφοῦ λέγεις,
εἰ κρυπτὸν ἐς γῆν τήνδ' ἂν Αἰγίσθου φόβῳ
δοκεῖς ἀδελφὸν τὸν ἐμὸν εὐθαρσῆ μολεῖν.
ἔπειτα χαίτης πῶς συνοίσεται πλόκος;
ὁ μὲν παλαίστραις ἀνδρὸς εὐγενοῦς τραφείς, 210
ὁ δὲ κτενισμοῖς θῆλυς· ἀλλ' ἀμήχανον. [*abruptly.*]

πολλοῖς δ' ἂν εὕροις βοστρύχους ὁμοπτέρους
καὶ μὴ γεγῶσιν αἵματος ταὐτοῦ, γέρον.

ΠΡ. σὺ δ' εἰς ἴχνος βᾶσ' ἀρβύλης σκέψαι βάσιν,
εἰ σύμμετρος σῷ ποδὶ γενήσεται, τέκνον. 215

ΗΛ. πῶς δ' ἂν γένοιτ' ἂν ἐν κοαταιλέῳ πέδῳ
γαίας ποδῶν ἔκμακτρον; εἰ δ' ἔστιν τόδε,
δυοῖν ἀδελφοῖν ποὺς ἂν οὐ γένοιτ' ἴσος
ἀνδρός τε καὶ γυναικός, ἀλλ' ἄρσην κρατεῖ.

ΠΡ. [*after a slight pause*]
οἱ δὲ ξένοι ποῦ; βούλομαι γὰρ εἰσιδὼν 220
αὐτοὺς ἐρέσθαι σοῦ κασιγνήτου πέρι.

[*Enter* ORESTES *and* PYLADES *from the house;* ELECTRA *turns and sees them.*]

ΗΛ. οἷδ' ἐκ δόμων βαίνουσι λαιψηρῷ ποδί.

ΟΡ. [*greeting the old man*] χαῖρ', ὦ γεραιέ.
[*drawing* ELECTRA *aside*] τοῦ ποτ', Ἠλέκτρα, τόδε
παλαιὸν ἀνδρὸς λείψανον φίλων κυρεῖ;

ΗΛ. οὗτος τὸν ἀμὸν πατέρ' ἔθρεψεν, ὦ ξένε. 225

ΟΡ. τί φῄς; ὅδ' ὃς σὸν ἐξέκλεψε σύγγονον;

ΗΛ. ὅδ' ἔσθ' ὁ σώσας κεῖνον, εἴπερ ἔστ' ἔτι.

ΟΡ. ἔα· [*looking at the old man, who is observing him narrowly*]
τί μ' ἐσδέδορκεν, ὥσπερ ἀργύρου σκοπῶν
λαμπρὸν χαρακτῆρ'; ἢ προσεικάζει μέ τῳ;

ΗΛ. ἴσως Ὀρέστου σ' ἥλιχ' ἥδεται βλέπων. 230

[*The old man still gazing at* ORESTES *walks slowly round him.*]

ΟΡ. φίλου γε φωτός· τί δὲ κυκλεῖ πέριξ πόδα;

ΗΛ. καὐτὴ τόδ' εἰσορῶσα θαυμάζω, ξένε.

ΠΡ. [*advancing to* ELECTRA]
ὦ πότνι', εὔχου, θύγατερ Ἠλέκτρα, θεοῖς

ΗΛ. [*interrupting*] τί τῶν ἀπόντων ἢ τί τῶν ὄντων πέρι;
ΠΡ. [*solemnly*] λαβεῖν φίλον θησαυρόν, ὃν φαίνει θεός. 235
ΗΛ. ἰδού, καλῶ θεούς.
[*clasping her hands*] ἢ τί δὴ λέγεις, γέρον;
ΠΡ. βλέψον νυν ἐς τόνδ', ὦ τέκνον, τὸν φίλτατον.
[*turning her round to* ORESTES.]
ΗΛ. [*sadly*] πάλαι δέδοικα, μὴ σύ γ' οὐκέτ' εὖ φρονῇς.
ΠΡ. οὐκ εὖ φρονῶ 'γὼ σὸν κασίγνητον βλέπων;
ΗΛ. [*starting suddenly*]
πῶς εἶπας, ὦ γεραί', ἀνέλπιστον λόγον; 240
ΠΡ. [*emphatically*] ὁρᾶν Ὀρέστην τόνδε τὸν Ἀγαμέμνονος
ΗΛ. ποῖον χαρακτῆρ' εἰσιδών, ᾧ πείσομαι; [*incredulous*]
ΠΡ. [*pointing at a scar in* ORESTES' *forehead*]
οὐλὴν παρ' ὀφρύν, ἥν ποτ' ἐν πατρός δόμοις
νεβρὸν διώκων σοῦ μέθ' ἡμάχθη πεσών.
ΗΛ. πῶς φῄς; ὁρῶ μὲν πτώματος τεκμήριον. 245
[*astounded, but still hesitating.*]
ΠΡ. ἔπειτα μέλλεις προσπίτνειν τοῖς φιλτάτοις;
ΗΛ. [*resolved*] ἀλλ' οὐκέτ', ὦ γεραιέ· συμβόλοισι γὰρ
τοῖς σοῖς πέπεισμαι θυμόν. [*she rushes in a transport of joy into her brother's arms.*] ὦ χρόνῳ φανείς,
ἔχω σ' ἀέλπτως. ΟΡ. κἀξ ἐμοῦ γ' ἔχει χρόνῳ.
ΗΛ. οὐδέποτε δόξασ'. ΟΡ. οὐδ' ἐγὼ γὰρ ἤλπισα. 250
ΠΡ. ἐκεῖνος εἶ σύ;
ΟΡ. σύμμαχός γέ σοι μόνος,
ἣν ἐκσπάσωμαί γ' ὃν μετέρχομαι βόλον.
πέποιθα δ'. ἢ χρὴ μηκέθ' ἡγεῖσθαι θεούς,
εἰ τἄδικ' ἔσται τῆς δίκης ὑπέρτερα. [*with confidence.*]

SCENE V.

THE PLOT.

ORESTES *and* ELECTRA *embracing. At last* ORESTES *turns with a sigh to the old man, who stands a little apart.* PYLADES *is a silent spectator of the scene.*

ΟΡ. εἶεν· φίλας μὲν ἡδονὰς ἀσπασμάτων 255
ἔχω, χρόνῳ δὲ καὖθις αὐτὰ δώσομεν.
σὺ δ', ὦ γεραιέ, καίριος γὰρ ἤλυθες,
λέξον, τί δρῶν ἂν φονέα τισαίμην πατρὸς
μητέρα τε τὴν κοινωνὸν ἀνοσίων γάμων.
ἔστιν τί μοι κατ' Ἄργος εὐμενὲς φίλων; 260
ἢ πάντ' ἀνεσκευάσμεθ', ὥσπερ αἱ τύχαι;
τῷ συγγένωμαι; νύχιος, ἢ καθ' ἡμέραν;
ποίαν ὁδὸν τραπώμεθ' εἰς ἐχθροὺς ἐμούς;
ΠΡ. ὦ τέκνον, οὐδεὶς δυστυχοῦντί σοι φίλος.
εὕρημα γὰρ τὸ χρῆμα γίγνεται τόδε, 265
κοινῇ μετασχεῖν τἀγαθοῦ καὶ τοῦ κακοῦ.
σὺ δ', ἐκ βάθρων γὰρ πᾶς ἀνῄρησαι φίλοις
οὐδ' ἐλλέλοιπας ἐλπίδ', ἴσθι μου κλύων,
ἐν χειρὶ τῇ σῇ πάντ' ἔχεις καὶ τῇ τύχῃ
πατρῷον οἶκον καὶ πόλιν λαβεῖν σέθεν. 270
ΟΡ. τί δῆτα δρῶντες τοῦδ' ἂν ἐξικοίμεθα;
ΠΡ. κτανὼν Θυέστου παῖδα σήν τε μητέρα.
ΟΡ. ἥκω 'πὶ τόνδε στέφανον. ἀλλὰ πῶς λάβω;

ΠΡ. τειχέων μὲν ἐλθὼν ἐντὸς οὐδ' ἄν εἰ θέλοις.
ΟΡ. φρουραῖς κέκασται δεξιαῖς τε δορυφόρων; 275
ΠΡ. ἔγνως· φοβεῖται γάρ σε κοὐχ εὕδει σαφῶς.
ΟΡ. [*depressed*] εἶεν· σὺ δὴ τοὐνθένδε βούλευσον, γέρον.
ΠΡ. κἀμοῦ γ' ἄκουσον· ἄρτι γάρ μ' εἰσῆλθέ τι.
ΟΡ. [*fervently*] ἐσθλόν τι μηνύσειας, αἰσθοίμην δ' ἐγώ.
ΠΡ. Αἴγισθον εἶδον, ἡνίχ' εἶρπον ἐνθάδε. 280
ΟΡ. τί δρῶνθ'; ὁρῶ γὰρ ἐλπίδ' ἐξ ἀμηχάνων.
ΠΡ. οὐκ οἶδα πλὴν ἕν, βουσφαγεῖν ὡπλίζετο.
ΟΡ. πόσων μετ' ἀνδρῶν; ἢ μόνος δμώων μέτα;
ΠΡ. οὐδεὶς παρῆν Ἀργεῖος, οἰκεία δὲ χείρ.
ΟΡ. οὔ πού τις ὅστις γνωριεῖ μ' ἰδών, γέρον; 285
ΠΡ. δμῶες μέν εἰσιν, οἳ σέ γ' οὐκ εἶδόν ποτε.
ΟΡ. ἡμῖν δ' ἂν εἶεν, εἰ κρατοῦμεν, εὐμενεῖς;
ΠΡ. [*with a touch of satire*]
δούλων γὰρ ἴδιον τοῦτο, σοὶ δὲ σύμφορον.
ΟΡ. καλῶς ἔλεξας. ἡ τεκοῦσα δ' ἐστὶ ποῦ;
ΠΡ. Ἄργει· παρέσται δ' ἐν τάχει θοίνην ἔπι. 290
ΟΡ. τί δ' οὐχ ἅμ' ἐξώρμᾶτ' ἐμὴ μήτηρ πόσει;
ΠΡ. [*scornfully*] ψόγον τρέμουσα δημοτῶν ἐλείπετο.
ΟΡ. ξυνῆχ'· ὕποπτος οὖσα γιγνώσκει πόλει.
ΠΡ. τοιαῦτα· μισεῖται γὰρ ἀνόσιος γυνή.
ΟΡ. πῶς οὖν ἐκείνην τόνδε τ' ἐν ταὐτῷ κτενῶ; 295
ΗΛ. ἐγὼ φόνον γε μητρὸς ἐξαρτύσομαι.
ΟΡ. καὶ μὴν ἐκεῖνά γ' ἡ τύχη θήσει καλῶς.
ΗΛ. [*turning to point to the old man*]
ὑπηρετείτω μὲν δυοῖν ὄντοιν ὅδε.
ΠΡ. ἔσται τάδ· εὑρίσκεις δὲ μητρὶ πῶς φόνον;

ΗΛ. λεχώ μ' ἀπάγγελλ' οὖσαν ἄρσενος τόκῳ. 300
ΠΡ. πότερα πάλαι τεκοῦσαν, ἢ νεωστὶ δή;
ΗΛ. δέχ' ἡλίους, ἐν οἷσιν ἀγνεύει λεχώ.
ΠΡ. καὶ δὴ τί τοῦτο μητρὶ προσβάλλει φόνον;
ΗΛ. ἥξει κλύουσα λόχι' ἐμοῦ νοσήματα.
ΠΡ. πόθεν; τί δ' αὐτῇ σοῦ μέλειν δοκεῖς, τέκνον, 305
ΗΛ. ναί· καὶ δακρύσει γ' ἀξίωμ' ἐμῶν τόκων.
ΠΡ. ἴσως· πάλιν τοι μῦθον ἐς καμπὴν ἄγω.
ΗΛ. [*with stern resolve*]
ἐλθοῦσα μέντοι δῆλον ὡς ἀπόλλυται.
ΠΡ. εἰ γὰρ θάνοιμι τοῦτ' ἰδὼν ἐγώ ποτε. [*earnestly.*]
ΗΛ. [*pointing to* ORESTES]
πρώτιστα μέν νυν τῷδ' ὑφήγησαι, γέρον. 310
ΠΡ. Αἴγισθος ἔνθα νῦν θυηπολεῖ θεοῖς;
ΗΛ. ἔπειτ' ἀπαντῶν μητρὶ τἀπ' ἐμοῦ φράσον.
ΠΡ. ὥστ' αὐτά γ' ἐκ σοῦ στόματος εἰμῆσθαι δοκεῖν.
ΗΛ. [*to* ORESTES] σὸν ἔργον ἤδη· πρόσθεν εἴληχας φόνου
ΟΡ. στείχοιμ' ἄν, εἴ τις ἡγεμὼν γίγνοιθ' ὁδοῦ. 315
ΗΛ. καὶ μὴν ἐγὼ πέμποιμ' ἂν οὐκ ἀκουσίως.
ΟΡ. [*holding up his hands to pray*]
ὦ Ζεῦ πατρῷε καὶ τροπαῖ' ἐχθρῶν ἐμῶν,
οἴκτειρέ θ' ἡμᾶς, οἰκτρὰ γὰρ πεπόνθαμεν,—
ΗΛ. [*interrupting, and praying likewise*]
οἴκτειρε δῆτα σοῦ γε φύντας ἐκ γένους.
ΟΡ. Ἥρα τε, βωμῶν ἣ Μυκηναίων κρατεῖς, 320
νίκην δὸς ἡμῖν, εἰ δίκαι' αἰτούμεθα.
ΗΛ. δὸς δῆτα πατρὸς τοῖσδε τιμωρὸν δίκην.

ΟΡ. [*gazing earnestly on the ground*]
σύ τ', ὦ κάτω γῆς ἀνοσίως οἰκῶν, πάτερ,
ἄμυν' ἄμυνε τοῖσδε φιλτάτοις τέκνοις.
[*a pause: then passionately*]
ἥκουσας, ὦ δεῖν' ἐξ ἐμῆς μητρὸς παθών; 325

ΗΛ. [*with firmness*]
πάντ', οἶδ', ἀκούει τάδε πατήρ· στείχειν δ' ἀκμή.
καί σοι προφωνῶ πρὸς τάδ' Αἴγισθον θανεῖν·
ὡς, εἰ παλαισθεὶς πτῶμα θανάσιμον πεσεῖ,
τέθνηκα κἀγώ, μηδέ με ζῶσαν λέγε·
παίσω κάρα γὰρ τοὐμὸν ἀμφήκει ξίφει. 330
δόμων δ' ἔσω βᾶσ' εὐτρεπὲς ποιήσομαι.
ὡς, ἢν μὲν ἔλθῃ πύστις εὐτυχὴς σέθεν,
ὀλολύξεται πᾶν δῶμα, θνήσκοντος δέ σου
τἀναντί' ἔσται τῶνδε· ταῦτά σοι λέγω.

ΟΡ. πάντ' οἶδα.

ΗΛ. πρὸς τάδ' ἄνδρα γίγνεσθαί σε χρή. 335
[*Exit* ORESTES.]

[*turning to the* CHORUS]
ὑμεῖς δέ μοι, γυναῖκες, εὖ πυρσεύετε
κραυγὴν ἀγῶνος τοῦδε. φρουρήσω δ' ἐγώ,
πρόχειρον ἔγχος χειρὶ βαστάζουσ' ἐμῇ·
[*with a noble defiance*]
οὐ γάρ ποτ' ἐχθροῖς τοῖς ἐμοῖς νικωμένη
δίκην ὑφέξω σῶμ' ἐμὸν καθυβρίσαι. 340
[*Exit into the cottage.*]

SCENE VI.

THE RETRIBUTION.

The CHORUS *alone in the orchestra, singing. Suddenly a noise of voices, and confused tumult, and groans, are heard in the distance. The* CHORUS *stop singing, and the leader, while they look at each other with startled glances, says:—*

ΧΟ. ἔα ἔα·
φίλαι, βοῆς ἠκούσατ', ἢ δοκὼ κενὴ
ὑπῆλθέ μ', ὥστε νερτέρα βροντὴ Διός;
[*pauses; then as the tumult becomes louder*]
ἰδοὺ τάδ' οὐκ ἄσημα πνεύματ' αἴρεται·
[*mounting the stage rapidly, and advancing to the house door she calls out in a loud voice*]
δέσποιν', ἄμειψον δώματ', Ἠλέκτρα, τάδε. 345

ΗΛ. [ELECTRA *comes out eagerly with a sword*]
φίλαι, τί χρῆμα; πῶς ἀγῶνος ἥκομεν;

ΧΟ. οὐκ οἶδα πλὴν ἕν, φόνιον οἰμωγὴν κλύω.

ΗΛ. ἤκουσα κἀγώ, τηλόθεν μέν, ἀλλ' ὅμως.

ΧΟ. μακρὰν γὰρ ἕρπει γῆρυς, ἐμφανής γε μήν.

ΗΛ. Ἀργεῖος ὁ στεναγμός, ἢ φίλων ἐμῶν; 350

ΧΟ. οὐκ οἶδα· πᾶν γὰρ μίγνυται μέλος βοῆς.

ΗΛ. σφαγὴν ἀϋτεῖς τήνδε μοι· τί μέλλομεν;
[*drawing her sword*]

ΧΟ. [*staying her*] ἔπισχε, τρανῶς ὡς μάθῃς τύχας σέθεν.

ΗΛ. οὐκ ἔστι· νικώμεσθα· ποῦ γὰρ ἄγγελοι; [*in despair*]

ΧΟ. ἥξουσιν· οὗτοι βασιλέα φαῦλον κτανεῖν. 355

[*Enter messenger hastily and triumphant.*]

ΑΓ. ὦ καλλίνικοι παρθένοι Μυκηνίδες,
νικῶντ' Ὀρέστην πᾶσιν ἀγγέλλω φίλοις,
Ἀγαμέμνονος δὲ φονέα κείμενον πέδῳ
Αἴγισθον· ἀλλὰ θεοῖσιν εὔχεσθαι χρεών.

ΗΛ. τίς δ' εἶ σύ; πῶς μοι πιστὰ σημαίνεις τάδε; 360

ΑΓ. [*surprised*] οὐκ οἶσθ' ἀδελφοῦ μ' εἰσορῶσα πρόσπολον;

ΗΛ. [*in sudden joyful recognition*]
ὦ φίλτατ', ἔκ τοι δείματος δυσγνωσίαν
εἶχον προσώπου· νῦν δὲ γιγνώσκω σε δή.
τί φῄς; τέθνηκε πατρὸς ἐμοῦ στυγνὸς φονεύς;

ΑΓ. τέθνηκε· δίς σοι ταῦθ', ἃ γοῦν βούλει, λέγω. 365

ΧΟ. [*with uplifted hands*]
ὦ θεοί, Δίκη τε πάνθ' ὁρῶσ', ἦλθές ποτε.

ΗΛ. ποίῳ τρόπῳ δὲ καὶ τίνι ῥυθμῷ φόνου
κτείνει Θυέστου παῖδα, βούλομαι μαθεῖν.

ΑΓ. ἐπεὶ μελάθρων τῶνδ' ἀπήραμεν πόδα,
ἐσβάντες ᾖμεν δίκροτον εἰς ἁμαξιτὸν 370
ἔνθ' ἦν ὁ κλεινὸς τῶν Μυκηναίων ἄναξ.
κυρεῖ δὲ κήποις ἐν καταρρύτοις βεβώς,
δρέπων τερείνης μυρσίνης κάρᾳ πλόκους·
ἰδών τ' ἀϋτεῖ, 'χαίρετ', ὦ ξένοι· τίνες;
'πόθεν πορεύεσθ' ἔστε τ' ἐκ ποίας χθονός;' 375
ὁ δ' εἶπ' Ὀρέστης, 'Θεσσαλοί· πρὸς δ' Ἀλφεὸν
'θύσοντες ἐρχόμεσθ' Ὀλυμπίῳ Διί.'
κλύων δὲ ταῦτ' Αἴγισθος ἐννέπει τάδε·
'νῦν μὲν παρ' ἡμὶν χρὴ συνεστίους ἐμοὶ

'θοίνῃ γενέσθαι· τυγχάνω δὲ βουθυτῶν 380
'Νύμφαις· ἑῷοι δ' ἐξαναστάντες λέχους
'ἐς ταὐτὸν ἥξετ'. ἀλλ' ἴωμεν ἐς δόμους
καὶ ταῦθ' ἅμ' ἠγόρευε καὶ χερὸς λαβὼν
παρῆγεν ἡμᾶς, οὐδ' ἀπαρνεῖσθαι χρεών.
ἐπεὶ δ' ἐν οἴκοις ἦμεν, ἐννέπει τάδε· 385
'λούτρ' ὡς τάχιστα τοῖς ξένοις τις αἱρέτω,
'ὡς ἀμφὶ βωμὸν στῶσι χερνίβων πέλας.'
ἀλλ' εἶπ' 'Ορέστης, 'ἀρτίως ἡγνίσμεθα
'λουτροῖσι καθαροῖς ποταμίων ῥείθρων ἄπο.
'εἰ δὲ ξένους ἀστοῖσι συνθύειν χρεών, 390
'Αἴγισθ', ἕτοιμοι, κοὐκ ἀπαρνούμεσθ', ἄναξ.'
τοῦτον μὲν οὖν μεθεῖσαν ἐκ μέσου λόγον·
λόγχας δὲ θέντες, δεσπότου φρουρήματα,
δμῶες, πρὸς ἔργον πάντες ἵεσαν χέρας.
οἱ μὲν σφαγεῖον ἔφερον, οἱ δ' ᾖρον κανᾶ, 395
ἄλλοι δὲ πῦρ ἀνῆπτον ἀμφί τ' ἐσχάρας
λέβητας ὤρθουν· πᾶσα δ' ἐκτύπει στέγη.
λαβὼν δὲ προχύτας μητρὸς εὐνέτης σέθεν
ἔβαλλε βωμούς, τοιάδ' ἐννέπων ἔπη·
'Νύμφαι πετραῖαι, πολλάκις με βουθυτεῖν 400
'καὶ τὴν κατ' οἴκους Τυνδαρίδα δάμαρτ' ἐμήν,
'πράσσοντας ὡς νῦν, τοὺς δ' ἐμοὺς ἐχθροὺς κακῶς·'
λέγων 'Ορέστην καὶ σέ· δεσπότης δ' ἐμὸς
τἀναντί' ηὔχετ', οὐ γεγωνίσκων λόγους,
λαβεῖν πατρῷα δώματ'. ἐκ κανοῦ δ' ἑλὼν 405
Αἴγισθος ὀρθὴν σφαγίδα, μοσχίαν τρίχα
τεμών, ἐφ' ἁγνὸν πῦρ ἔθηκε δεξιᾷ,

κἄσφαξ', ἐπ' ὤμων μόσχου ὡς ἦραν χεροῖν
δμῶες· λέγει δὲ σῳ κασιγνήτῳ τάδε·
'ἐκ τῶν καλῶν κομποῦσι τοῖσι Θεσσαλοῖς 410
'εἶναι τόδ', ὅστις ταῦρον ἀρταμεῖ καλῶς
'ἵππους τ' ὀχμάζει. λαβὲ σίδηρον, ὦ ξένε,
'δεῖξόν τε φήμην ἔτυμον ἀμφὶ Θεσσαλῶν.'
ὁ δ' εὐκρότητον Δωρίδ' ἁρπάσας χεροῖν,
ῥίψας ἀπ' ὤμων εὐπρεπῆ πορπάματα, 415
Πυλάδην μὲν εἷλετ' ἐν πόνοις ὑπηρέτην,
δμῶας δ' ἀπωθεῖ· καὶ λαβὼν μόσχου πόδα,
λευκὰς ἐγύμνου σάρκας, ἐκτείνων χέρα·
θᾶσσον δὲ βύρσαν ἐξέδειρεν ἢ δρομεὺς
δισσοὺς διαύλους ἱππίους διήνυσε, 420
κἀνεῖτο λαγόνας. ἱρὰ δ' ἐς χεῖρας λαβὼν
Αἴγισθος ἤθρει. καὶ λοβὸς μὲν οὐ προσῆν
σπλάγχνοις, πύλαι δὲ καὶ δοχαὶ χολῆς πέλας
κακὰς ἔφαινον τῷ σκοποῦντι προσβολάς.
χὠ μὲν σκυθράζει, δεσπότης δ' ἀνιστορεῖ, 425
'τί χρῆμ' ἀθυμεῖς, ὦ ξέν';' 'ὀρρωδῶ τινὰ
'δόλον θυραῖον. ἔστι δ' ἔχθιστος βροτῶν
''Αγαμέμνονος παῖς πολέμιός τ' ἐμοῖς δόμοις.'
ὁ δ' εἶπε, 'φυγάδος δῆτα δειμαίνεις δόλον,
'πόλεως ἀνάσσων; οὐχ, ὅπως πευστηρίαν 430
'θοινασόμεσθα, Φθιάδ' ἀντὶ Δωρικῆς
'οἴσει τις ἡμῖν κοπίδ'; ἀπορρήξω χέλυν.'
λαβὼν δὲ κόπτει. σπλάγχνα δ' Αἴγισθος λαβὼν
ἤθρει διαιρῶν. τοῦ δὲ νεύοντος κάτω,
ὄνυχας ἐπ' ἄκρους στὰς κασίγνητος σέθεν 435

ἐς σφονδύλους ἔπαισε, νωτιαῖα δὲ
ἔρρηξεν ἄρθρα. πᾶν δὲ σῶμ' ἄνω κάτω
ἤσπαιρεν, ἐσφάδαζε δυσθνῆσκον φόνῳ.
δμῶες δ' ἰδόντες εὐθὺς ᾔξαν ἐς δόρυ,
πολλοὶ μάχεσθαι πρὸς δύ'. ἀνδρείας δ' ὕπο 440
ἔστησαν ἀντίπρῳρα σείοντες βέλη
Πυλάδης Ὀρέστης τ'. εἶπε δ', ' οὐχὶ δυσμενὴς
' ἥκω πόλει τῇδ', οὐδ' ἐμοῖς ὀπάοσι,
' φονέα δὲ πατρὸς ἀντετιμωρησάμην
' τλήμων Ὀρέστης. ἀλλὰ μή με κτείνετε, 445
' πατρὸς παλαιοὶ δμῶες.' οἱ δ', ἐπεὶ λόγων
ἤκουσαν, ἔσχον κάμακας· ἐγνώσθη δ' ὑπὸ
γέροντος ἐν δόμοισιν ἀρχαίου τινός.
στέφουσι δ' εὐθὺς σοῦ κασιγνήτου κάρα
χαίροντες, ἀλαλάζοντες. ἔρχεται δὲ σοὶ 450
κάρα 'πιδείξων, οὐχὶ Γοργόνος φέρων,
ἀλλ' ὃν στυγεῖς Αἴγισθον· αἷμα δ' αἵματος
πικρὸς δανεισμὸς ἦλθε τῷ θανόντι νῦν.

[ELECTRA *goes excitedly into the house; the messenger follows slowly.*]

SCENE VII.

ELECTRA'S CURSE.

The CHORUS *in the orchestra, singing a song of triumph. Enter* ORESTES *and* PYLADES, *the former carrying the bleeding head of* AEGISTHUS. *Attendants behind carry the body on a litter. As he approaches the cottage,* ELECTRA *comes out with two garlands in her hand, radiant. She advances towards him, and says:—*

ΗΛ. ὦ καλλίνικε, πατρὸς ἐκ νικηφόρου
γεγώς, Ὀρέστα, τῆς ὑπ' Ἰλίῳ μάχης, 455
δέξαι κόμης σῆς βοστρύχων ἀνδήματα.
[*placing one garland on his head*]
ἥκεις γὰρ οὐκ ἀχρεῖον ἔκπλεθρον δραμὼν
ἀγῶν' ἐς οἴκους, ἀλλὰ πολέμιον κτανὼν
Αἴγισθον, ὃς σὸν πατέρα κἀμὸν ὤλεσε.
σύ τ', ὦ παρασπίστ', ἀνδρὸς εὐσεβεστάτου 460
παίδευμα, Πυλάδη, στέφανον ἐξ ἐμῆς χερὸς
δέχου·
[*crowning him too*] φέρει γὰρ καὶ σὺ τῷδ' ἴσον μέρος
ἀγῶνος· ἀεὶ δ' εὐτυχεῖς φαίνοισθέ μοι.

ΟΡ. [*gravely*] θεοὺς μὲν ἡγοῦ πρῶτον, Ἠλέκτρα, τύχης
ἀρχηγέτας τῆσδ', εἶτα κἄμ' ἐπαίνεσον, 465
τὸν τῶν θεῶν τε τῆς τύχης θ' ὑπηρέτην.
ἥκω γὰρ οὐ λόγοισιν, ἀλλ' ἔργοις κτανὼν
Αἴγισθον· ὡς δέ τῳ σάφ' εἰδέναι τάδε
προθῶμεν, αὐτὸν τὸν θανόντα σοι φέρω,

[*holding up the head and showing the body*]
ὅν, εἴτε χρῄζεις, θηρσὶν ἁρπαγὴν πρόθες, 470
ἢ σκῦλον οἰωνοῖσιν, αἰθέρος τέκνοις,
πήξασ' ἔρεισον σκόλοπι· σὸς γάρ ἐστι νῦν
δοῦλος, πάροιθε δεσπότης κεκλημένος.

ΗΛ. [*after a pause, reluctant*]
αἰσχύνομαι μέν, βούλομαι δ' εἰπεῖν ὅμως

ΟΡ. τί χρῆμα; λέξον, ὡς φόβου γ' ἔξωθεν εἶ. 475

ΗΛ. νεκροὺς ὑβρίζειν, μή μέ τις φθόνῳ βάλῃ.

ΟΡ. οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδεὶς ὅστις ἂν μέμψαιτό σοι.

ΗΛ. [*doubtful*] δυσάρεστος ἡμῶν καὶ φιλόψογος πόλις.

ΟΡ. λέγ', εἴ τι χρῄζεις, σύγγον'· ἀσπόνδοισι γὰρ
νόμοισιν ἔχθραν τῷδε συμβεβλήκαμεν. 480

ΗΛ. [*resolute*] εἶεν· τίν' ἀρχὴν πρῶτά σ' ἐξείπω κακῶν;
[*gazing at the head*]
ποίας τελευτάς; τίνα μέσον τάξω λόγον;
καὶ μὴν δι' ὄρθρων γ' οὔποτ' ἐξελίμπανον
θρυλοῦσ', ἃ γ' εἰπεῖν ἤθελον κατ' ὄμμα σόν,
εἰ δὴ γενοίμην δειμάτων ἐλευθέρα 485
τῶν πρόσθε· νῦν οὖν ἐσμέν· ἀποδώσω δέ σοι
ἐκεῖν' ἃ σε ζῶντ' ἤθελον λέξαι κακά.
ἀπώλεσάς με κὠρφανὴν φίλου πατρὸς
καὶ τόνδ' ἔθηκας, οὐδὲν ἠδικημένος,
κἄγημας αἰσχρῶς μητέρ', ἄνδρα τ' ἔκτανες 490
στρατηλατοῦνθ' Ἕλλησιν, οὐκ ἐλθὼν Φρύγας.
ἐς τοῦτο δ' ἦλθες ἀμαθίας ὥστ' ἤλπισας
ὡς ἐς σὲ μὲν δὴ μητέρ' οὐχ ἕξεις κακὴν

γήμας, ἐμοῦ δὲ πατρὸς ἠδίκεις λέχη.
ἴστω δ', ὅταν τις διολέσας δάμαρτά του 495
κρυπταῖσιν εὐναῖς εἶτ' ἀναγκασθῇ λαβεῖν,
δύστηνός ἐστιν, εἰ δοκεῖ τὸ σωφρονεῖν
ἐκεῖ μὲν αὐτὴν οὐκ ἔχειν, παρ' οἷ δ' ἔχειν.
ἄλγιστα δ' ᾤκεις, οὐ δοκῶν οἰκεῖν κακῶς·
ᾔδησθα γὰρ δῆτ' ἀνόσιον γήμας γάμον, 500
μήτηρ δὲ σ' ἄνδρα δυσσεβῆ κεκτημένη.
πᾶσιν δ' ἐν Ἀργείοισιν ἤκουες τάδε·
ὁ τῆς γυναικός, οὐχὶ τἀνδρὸς ἡ γυνή.
καίτοι τόδ' αἰσχρόν, προστατεῖν γε δωμάτων
γυναῖκα, μὴ τὸν ἄνδρα· κἀκείνους στυγῶ 505
τοὺς παῖδας, ὅστις τοῦ μὲν ἄρσενος πατρὸς
οὐκ ὠνόμασται, τῆς δὲ μητρὸς ἐν πόλει.
ἐπίσημα γὰρ γήμαντι καὶ μείζω λέχη,
τἀνδρὸς μὲν οὐδείς, τῶν δὲ θηλειῶν λόγος.
ὃ δ' ἠπάτα σε πλεῖστον οὐκ ἐγνωκότα, 510
ηὔχεις τις εἶναι, τοῖσι χρήμασι σθένων·
τὰ δ' οὐδέν, εἰ μὴ βραχὺν ὁμιλῆσαι χρόνον.
ἡ γὰρ φύσις βέβαιος, οὐ τὰ χρήματα.
ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἀεὶ παραμένουσ' αἴρει κάρα·
ὁ δ' ὄλβος ἄδικος καὶ μετὰ σκαιῶν ξυνών, 515
ἐξέπτατ' οἴκων, σμικρὸν ἀνθήσας χρόνον.
[*turning away with passionate scorn*]
ἔρρ', οὐδὲν εἰδὼς ὧν ἐφευρεθεὶς χρόνῳ
δίκην δέδωκας, ὧδέ τις κακοῦργος ὤν.
μή μοι, τὸ πρῶτον βῆμ' ἐὰν δράμῃ καλῶς,

νικᾶν δοκείτω τὴν Δίκην, πρὶν ἂν πέλας 520
γραμμῆς ἵκηται, καὶ τέλος κάμψῃ βίου.

ΟΡ. [*to attendants*] εἶεν. κομίζειν τοῦδε σῶμ' ἔσω χρεὼν
σκότῳ τε δοῦναι, δμῶες, ὡς, ὅταν μόλῃ
μήτηρ, σφαγῆς πάροιθε μή σφ' ἴδῃ νεκρόν.
[*the attendants take away the body.*]

ΗΛ. [*suddenly, looking off the stage*]
ἐπίσχες· ἐμβάλωμεν εἰς ἄλλον λόγον. 525

ΟΡ. τί δ'; ἐκ Μυκηνῶν μῶν βοηδρόμους ὁρᾷς;

ΗΛ. οὔκ, ἀλλὰ τὴν τεκοῦσαν, ἥ μ' ἐγείνατο.

ΟΡ. καλῶς ἄρ' ἄρκυν ἐς μέσην πορεύεται.

ΗΛ. καὶ μὴν ὄχοις γε καὶ στολῇ λαμπρύνεται.

ΟΡ. [*irresolute*] τί δῆτα δρῶμεν; μητέρ' ἢ φονεύσομεν; 530

ΗΛ. [*sternly*] μῶν σ' οἶκτος εἶλε, μητρὸς ὡς εἶδες δέμας;

ΟΡ. φεῦ. [*hesitating and downcast.*]
πῶς γὰρ κτάνω νιν, ἥ μ' ἔθρεψε κἄτεκεν;

ΗΛ. ὥσπερ πατέρα σὸν ἥδε κἀμὸν ὤλεσεν.

ΟΡ. [*piteously*] ὦ Φοῖβε, πολλήν γ' ἀμαθίαν ἐθέσπισας,—

ΗΛ. [*interrupting*]
ὅπου δ' Ἀπόλλων σκαιὸς ᾖ, τίνες σοφοί; 535

ΟΡ. ὅστις μ' ἔχρησας μητέρ', ἣν οὐ χρῆν, κτανεῖν.

ΗΛ. βλάπτει δὲ δὴ τί πατρὶ τιμωρῶν σέθεν;

ΟΡ. μητροκτόνος νῦν φεύξομαι, τόθ' ἁγνὸς ὤν.

ΗΛ. καὶ μή γ' ἀμύνων πατρὶ δυσσεβὴς ἔσει.

ΟΡ. ἐγὼ δὲ μητρὶ τοῦ φόνου δώσω δίκας. 540

ΗΛ. οὐ μὴ κακισθεὶς εἰς ἀναυδρίαν πεσεῖ;

ΟΡ. [*roused*] ἀλλ' ἦ τον αὐτὸν τῇδ' ὑποστήσω δόλον

ΗΛ. ὦ καὶ πόσιν καθεῖλες Αἴγισθον κτανών.

ΟΡ. [*firmly*] εἴσειμι· δεινοῦ δ' ἄρχομαι προβλήματος.
καὶ δεινὰ δράσω γ'· εἰ θεοῖς δοκεῖ τάδε, 545
ἔστω· πικρὸν δὲ χἠδὺ τἀγώνισμά μοι.

[*Exit into the house, followed by* ELECTRA, *slowly, in deep thought.*]

SCENE VIII.

FINAL VENGEANCE.

Enter slowly the chariot of CLYTAEMNESTRA, *with gorgeous trappings. She herself is seated in the centre, with her Trojan maidens round her. When the chariot stops,* CLYTAEMNESTRA *turns to her maidens and bids them dismount.* ELECTRA *stands humbly in the background, waiting to receive her.*

ΚΛ. ἔκβητ' ἀπήνης, Τρῳάδες, χειρὸς δ' ἐμῆς
λάβεσθ', ἵν' ἔξω τοῦδ' ὄχου στήσω πόδα.
[*Trojan maidens dismount.*]
σκύλοισι μὲν γὰρ θεῶν κεκόσμηνται δόμοι
Φρυγίοις, ἐγὼ δὲ τάσδε, Τρῳάδος χθονὸς 550
ἐξαίρετ', ἀντὶ παιδὸς ἣν ἀπώλεσα,
σμικρὸν γέρας, καλὸν δὲ κέκτημαι δόμοις.

ΗΛ. [*coming modestly forward and offering to help*]
οὔκουν ἐγώ, δούλη γὰρ ἐκβεβλημένη
δόμων πατρῴων δυστυχεῖς οἰκῶ δόμους,
μῆτερ, λάβωμαι μακαρίας τῆς σῆς χερός; 555

ΚΛ. [*coldly*] δοῦλαι πάρεισιν αἵδε, μὴ σύ μοι πόνει.

ΗΛ. [*bitterly*] τί δ'; αἰχμάλωτόν τοί μ' ἀπῴκισας δόμων,
ἠρημένων δὲ δωμάτων ἠρήμεθα,
ὡς αἵδε, πατρὸς ὀρφαναὶ λελειμμέναι.

ΚΛ. τοιαῦτα μέντοι σὸς πατὴρ βουλεύματα 560
εἰς οὓς ἐχρῆν ἥκιστ' ἐβούλευσεν φίλων.
κεἰ μὲν πόλεως ἅλωσιν ἐξιώμενος,

ἢ δῶμ' ὀνήσων τἄλλα τ' ἐκσώζων τέκνα
ἔκτεινε πολλῶν μίαν ὕπερ, συγγνώστ' ἂν ἦν·
νῦν δ', οὕνεχ' Ἑλένη μάργος ἦν, ὅ τ' αὖ λαβὼν 565
ἄλοχον κολάζειν προδότιν οὐκ ἠπίστατο,
τούτων ἕκατι παῖδ' ἐμὴν διώλεσεν.
εἰ δ' ἐκ δόμων ἥρπαστο Μενέλεως λάθρα,
κτανεῖν μ' Ὀρέστην χρῆν, κασιγνήτης πόσιν
Μενέλαον ὡς σώσαιμι; σὸς δὲ πῶς πατὴρ 570
ἠνέσχετ' ἂν ταῦτ'; εἶτα τὸν μὲν οὐ θανεῖν
κτείναντα χρῆν τἄμ', ἐμὲ δὲ πρὸς κείνου παθεῖν;
ἔκτειν', ἐτρέφθην ἥνπερ ἦν πορεύσιμον
πρὸς τοὺς ἐκείνῳ πολεμίους. φίλων γὰρ ἂν
τίς ἂν πατρός σοῦ φόνον ἐκοινώνησέ μοι; 575
λέγ', εἴ τι χρῄζεις, κἀντίθες παρρησίᾳ,
ὅπως τέθνηκε σὸς πατὴρ οὐκ ἐνδίκως.

ΗΛ. [*deliberate and cold*]
δίκαι' ἔλεξας· ἡ δίκη δ' αἰσχρῶς ἔχει·
γυναῖκα γὰρ χρὴ πάντα συγχωρεῖν πόσει,
ἥτις φρενήρης. ᾗ δὲ μὴ δοκεῖ τάδε, 580
[*scornfully*] οὐδ' εἰς ἀριθμὸν τῶν ἐμῶν ἥκει λόγων.
[*gentler*] μέμνησο, μῆτερ, οὓς ἔλεξας ὑστάτους
λόγους, διδοῦσα πρὸς σέ μοι παρρησίαν.

ΚΛ. καὶ νῦν γέ φημι, κοὐκ ἀπαρνοῦμαι, τέκνον.

ΗΛ. λέγοιμ' ἄν· ἀρχὴ δ' ἥδε μοι προοιμίου. 585
εἴθ' εἶχες, ὦ τεκοῦσα, βελτίους φρένας.
τὸ μὲν γὰρ εἶδος αἶνον ἄξιον φέρει
Ἑλένης τε καὶ σοῦ, δύο δ' ἔφυτε συγγόνω,
ἄμφω ματαίω Κάστορός τ' οὐκ ἀξίω.

ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἁρπασθεῖσ' ἑκοῦσ' ἀπῴχετο, 590
σὺ δ' ἄνδρ' ἄριστον Ἑλλάδος διώλεσας,
σκῆψιν προτείνουσ', ὡς ὑπὲρ τέκνου πόσιν
ἔκτεινας· οὐ γάρ, ὡς ἔγωγ', ἴσασί σ' εὖ
ἥτις, θυγατρὸς πρὶν κεκυρῶσθαι σφαγάς,
νέον τ' ἀπ' οἴκων ἀνδρὸς ἐξωρμημένου, 595
ξανθὸν κατόπτρῳ πλόκαμον ἐξήσκεις κόμης.
γυνὴ δ' ἀπόντος ἀνδρὸς ἥτις ἐκ δόμων
ἐς κάλλος ἀσκεῖ, διάγραφ' ὡς οὖσαν κακήν.
οὐδὲν γὰρ αὐτὴν δεῖ θύρασιν εὐπρεπὲς
φαίνειν πρόσωπον, ἤν τι μὴ ζητῇ κακόν. 600
μόνην δὲ πασῶν οἶδ' ἐγὼ σ' Ἑλληνίδων
εἰ μὲν τὰ Τρώων εὐτυχοῖ, κεχαρμένην,
εἰ δ' ἥσσον' εἴη, συννεφοῦσαν ὄμματα,
Ἀγαμέμνον' οὐ χρῄζουσαν ἐκ Τροίας μολεῖν.
καίτοι καλῶς γε σωφρονεῖν παρεῖχέ σοι· 605
ἄνδρ' εἶχες οὐ κακίον' Αἰγίσθου πόσιν,
ὃν Ἑλλὰς αὐτῆς εἵλετο στρατηλάτην·
Ἑλένης δ' ἀδελφῆς τοιάδ' ἐξειργασμένης,
ἐξῆν κλέος σοι μέγα λαβεῖν· τὰ γὰρ κακὰ
παράδειγμα τοῖς ἐσθλοῖσιν εἴσοψίν τ' ἔχει. 610
εἰ δ', ὡς λέγεις, σὴν θυγατέρ' ἔκτεινεν πατήρ,
ἐγώ τί σ' ἠδίκησ' ἐμός τε σύγγονος;
πῶς οὐ πόσιν κτείνασα πατρῴους δόμους
ἡμῖν προσῆψας, ἀλλ' ἀπηνέγκω λέχη
τἀλλότρια, μισθοῦ τοὺς γάμους ὠνουμένη, 615
κοὔτ' ἀντιφεύγει παιδὸς ἀντὶ σοῦ πόσις
οὔτ' ἀντ' ἐμοῦ τέθνηκε, δὶς τόσως ἐμὲ

κτείνας ἀδελφῆς ζῶσαν· εἰ δ' ἀμείψεται
φόνον δικάζων φόνος, ἀποκτενῶ σ' ἐγὼ
καὶ παῖς Ὀρέστης, πατρὶ τιμωρούμενοι· 620
εἰ γὰρ δίκαι' ἐκεῖνα, καὶ τάδ' ἔνδικα.
ὅστις δὲ πλοῦτον ἢ εὐγένειαν εἰσιδὼν
γαμεῖ πονηράν, μῶρός ἐστι· μικρὰ γὰρ
μεγάλων ἀμείνω σώφρον' ἐν δόμοις λέχη.

ΚΛ. [*calmly*] ὦ παῖ, πέφυκας πατέρα σὸν στέργειν ἀεί, 625
ἔστιν δὲ καὶ τόδ'· οἱ μέν εἰσιν ἀρσένων,
οἱ δ' αὖ φιλοῦσι μητέρας μᾶλλον πατρός.
συγγνώσομαί σοι· [*softening*] καὶ γὰρ οὐχ οὕτως ἄγαν
χαίρω τι, τέκνον, τοῖς δεδραμένοις ἐμοί.
[*suddenly looking with pity at her daughter's poor garments*]
σὺ δ' ὧδ' ἄλουτος καὶ δυσείματος χρόα 630
λεχὼ νεογνῶν ἐκ τόκων πεπαυμένη;
[*with a burst of remorse*]
οἴμοι τάλαινα τῶν ἐμῶν βουλευμάτων·
ὡς μᾶλλον ἢ χρῆν ἤλασ' εἰς ὀργὴν πόσιν.

ΗΛ. [*sternly and contemptuously*]
ὀψὲ στενάζεις, ἡνίκ' οὐκ ἔχεις ἄκη·
πατὴρ μὲν οὖν τέθνηκε· τὸν δ' ἔξω χθονὸς 635
πῶς οὐ κομίζει παῖδ' ἀλητεύοντα σόν;

ΚΛ. δέδοικα· τοὐμὸν δ', οὐχὶ τοὐκείνου, σκοπῶ.
πατρὸς γάρ, ὡς λέγουσι, θυμοῦται φόνῳ.

ΗΛ. τί δαὶ πόσιν σὸν ἄγριον εἰς ἡμᾶς ἔχεις;

ΚΛ. τρόποι τοιοῦτοι· καὶ σὺ δ' αὐθάδης ἔφυς. 640

ΗΛ. [*indignantly*] ἀλγῶ γάρ·
[*controlling herself*] ἀλλὰ παύσομαι θυμουμένη.

ΚΛ. καὶ μὴν ἐκεῖνος οὐκέτ' ἔσται σοι βαρύς.
ΗΛ. φρονεῖ μέγ'· ἐν γὰρ τοῖς ἐμοῖς ναίει δόμοις.
ΚΛ. παῦσαι λόγων τῶνδ'· ἀλλὰ τί μ' ἐκάλεις, τέκνον;
ΗΛ. ἤκουσας, οἶμαι, τῶν ἐμῶν λοχευμάτων· 645
τούτων ὕπερ μοι θῦσον, οὐ γὰρ οἶδ' ἐγώ,
δεκάτῃ σελήνῃ παιδὸς ὡς νομίζεται·
τρίβων γὰρ οὐκ εἶμ', ἄτοκος οὖσ' ἐν τῷ πάρος.
ΚΛ. ἄλλης τόδ' ἔργον, ἥ σ' ἔλυσεν ἐκ τόκων.
ΗΛ. αὐτὴ 'λόχευον κἄτεκον μόνη βρέφος. 650
ΚΛ. [*surprised*] οὕτως ἀγείτον' οἶκον ἵδρυσαι φίλων;
ΗΛ. [*bitterly*] πένητας οὐδεὶς βούλεται κτᾶσθαι φίλους.
ΚΛ. ἀλλ' εἶμι, παιδὸς ἀριθμὸν ὡς τελεσφόορν
θύσω θεοῖσι· σοὶ δ' ὅταν πράξω χάριν
τήνδ', εἶμ' ἐπ' ἀγρόν, οὗ πόσις θυηπολεῖ 655
Νύμφαισιν. [*to attendants*] ἀλλὰ τούσδ' ὄχους, ὀπάονες,
φάτναις ἄγοντες πρόσθεθ'. ἡνίκ' ἂν δέ με
δοκῆτε θυσίας τῆσδ' ἀπηλλάχθαι θεοῖς,
πάρεστε· δεῖ γὰρ καὶ ποσει δοῦναι χάριν.
[*attendants take away the chariot;* CLYTAEMNESTRA *goes toward the cottage*]
ΗΛ. [*as* CLYTAEMNESTRA *is going*] χώρει πένητας ἐς δόμους.
[*with covert irony*] φρούρει δέ μοι 660
μή σ' αἰθαλώσῃ πολύκαπνον στέγος πέπλους·
[*in a changed voice of stern hatred, as her mother is gone*]
θύσεις γὰρ οἷα χρή σε δαίμοσιν θύειν.
κανοῦν δ' ἐνῆρκται, καὶ τεθηγμένη σφαγίς,
ἥπερ καθεῖλε ταῦρον, οὗ πέλας πεσεῖ
πληγεῖσα· νυμφεύσει δὲ κἀν Ἅιδου δόμοις, 665

ᾧπερ ξυνηῦδες ἐν φάει· τοσήνδ' ἐγὼ
δώσω χάριν σοι, σὺ δέ γ' ἐμοὶ δίκην πατρός.

[*She follows her into the cottage.*]

[*The* CHORUS *then sing an ode, which is interrupted by screams, and suddenly from within comes the piteous appeal of* CLYTAEMNESTRA]

ὦ τέκνα, πρὸς θεῶν μὴ κτάνητε μητέρα.

[*More screams are heard, and then silence. The scene representing the cottage then turns on a pivot (a device called the ἐκκύκλημα), and displays the interior of the chamber, with the dead bodies of* AEGISTHUS *and* CLYTAEMNESTRA, *and* ORESTES *and* ELECTRA *standing silent and solemn over them.*]

NOTES.

SCENE 1.

3. *θαυμάζω*, prop. 'to wonder,' here 'to respect.'
4. *πράσσοντα*, 'faring,' its usual sense, and explained by *παθών*, &c.
5. *κατέκτα*, old strong aorist from *κατακτείνω*. The later form is *-έκτανον*. *χὴ* = *καὶ ἡ*·
6. *μυστηρίων*. The 'secrets' of the god means, of course, the oracular recesses.
9. *νυκτός*, gen. of comprehension, 'in the night.' *νυκτί*, the dat. means 'on the night,' where it is regarded as a point of time; the gen. expresses the whole, *at some period of which* the event happens.
10. *ἀπάρχεσθαι*, prop. 'to begin the sacrifice.' The hair was offered as a first offering. 'I made an offering of my hair.'
11. *μηλείου φόνου*, lit. 'of slaughter of sheep,' *i.e.* 'of slaughtered sheep.'
13. *πόδα*, a kind of cognate acc. with intrans. *βαίνω*. cf. 328, note.
14. *δυοῖν ἅμιλλαν ξυντιθείς*, 'joining my two-fold effort,' *i.e.* uniting in one enterprise two aims, viz., to find Electra and so avenge his father, and also to escape easily if discovered (*ἵν' ἐκβάλω*).
15. *ἐκβάλλω*, 'speed out,' intransitive. This usage is frequent with *ἐμβάλλω* and *εἰςβαλλω* and *προςβάλλω*, but very rare with this verb.

The subjunctive is to be noticed, after the historic tense

ἀφικόμην. The strict sequence would be *ἐκβάλοιμι*, but as it was the present purpose of the speaker, *ἐκβάλω* is quite logically correct.

17. *νιν* like *σφε* is accus. of the pronoun, and may be sing. or plur., masc., fem., or neut.

19. *συνέργατιν* [*ἐργ-* 'work'] 'a help-mate.'

22. *τρίβος* [*τρίβ-* tri- (Lat.) 'rub'] 'a path.'

24. *ἱστορέω*, 'to enquire.'

SCENE 2.

27. *ἐφεστίους*, 'close to our house.' *εὐνάς*, 'lair,' lit. 'couch.'

28. λόχου (λέγ- 'lay,') 'ambush.'

29. *οἶμος*, 'path.'

30. *ἐξαλύξωμεν*, subj. in 1 pers. as imper. called Hortative.

31. *τρέσῃς*. Observe the usage: in Greek *μή* has *pres.* imper. or *aor.* subjunctive. They said *μὴ ποίει* or *μὴ ποιήσῃς*, but not *μὴ ποίησον*.

32. *πίτ-νω*, 'to fall' (stem *πετ-*, nasalized, instead of the common reduplicated form *πίπτω* = *πι-πετ-ω*), hence 'to supplicate.'

33. Notice the double comparative, like 'Most Highest.'

36. *ξιφήρης* [stem *ἀρ-* 'fit'] 'girt with a sword.' λοχάω, 28.

37. *i.e.* 'you will agree that I am right in what I do.'

42. *μισθόν*, acc. in apposition to the sentence or act. Like *Ἑλένην κτάνωμεν Μενελέῳ λύπην πικράν*, where the *λύπη* is the slaughter.

43. *τοῦτο*, the happiness.

45. *συμφορᾶς*, gen. after *ὅπως*, of definition, lit. 'how in the matter of calamity.' It may be called the specifying gen.

46. *ξηρόν*, prop. 'dry,' so 'gaunt,' 'haggard.'

47. *συντήκω* (*τακ-* 'melt') 'waste away.' *γε*, see note, 72.

48. *σκυθίζω*, 'to treat as a Scythian does;' and as the Scythians

scalped their slain enemies, this phrase may be rendered, 'shorn as by Scythian razor.'

49. Lit. 'Does thy brother wound thee?' . . . *i.e.* 'dost thou grieve for thy brother?'

51. *i.e.* 'And are not you as dear to him?'

52. 'I must love him from afar, and not close at hand.' *i.e.* 'Our love is faithful, but it is the separation I lament.'

53. ἐκ τοῦ, 'from what?' *i.e.* 'Why?'

58. τηλορός [ὅρος, boundary], 'far away,' poet. form of the commoner τηλουρός.

59. ἄξιος δόμων, 'is a fit dweller in this house.'

62. *i.e.* 'Women follow their husbands' wishes, not their children's.' So Orestes clearly understands it, for he asks why Aegisthus put this slight upon her. And if so φίλαι must mean 'fond of,' a rare usage.

64. ἀσθενῆ, *i.e.* τέκνα, children who, being of low birth, should not be able to call him to account. So Orestes explains in his next question.

65. δῆθεν suggests that the motive is that of Aegisthus. It is especially used in this way, often (obviously) ironically, to give not the speaker's view, but the presumed or alleged view of others.

[MSS. here read δῆθε παῖδας, but δῆθε is unknown. If we suppose the text the true reading, it may have been first altered to παῖδας, suggested by plural ἀσθενῆ, and then falsely corrected into the MS. reading for metrical reasons.]

68. ἦρου, the aorist, where we should use the present. The quick-minded Greek counts a thing past the instant it has been done. cf. ᾤμωξα, 55.

αἰσχρόν γ' εἶπας, *i.e.* 'it is a shame to doubt him.'

οὐ γὰρ νῦν ἀκμή; 'is it not high time now?' [for him to come and wreak his retribution].

ἀκμή [ἀκ- sharp] 'the *point* of time,' lit.

72. γε, 'at least,' assents (in conversation) to a question, limiting at the same time or further specifying the assent. So it may be rendered with a 'Yes.' Thus, here; 'Would you slay her?' 'Ay, with the same axe!' τῷ for ᾧ; an archaism. The old article and relative were one.

73. λέγω, deliberative subjunctive, 'may I tell?' This use is well known also in Latin. τἀπὸ σοῦ, 'thy purpose.'

80. ἀρχαῖος, 'in days of old.'

82. ἔκυρσεν ὡς ἔκυρσεν, a euphemism, to avoid saying the fearful thing. 'He found—what he found.' [cf. O.T. 1376].

84. θυραίων, 'strangers' woes,' [θύρα, 'door']. This momentary forgetfulness of the part he is playing is very skilful.

87. λέγοιμ' ἄν, lit. 'I would speak,' a less obtrusive form of the future, 'I will speak.' (There are several uses of conditional due to Greek delicacy, *e.g.*, χωροῖς ἂν εἴσω for χώρει.)

89. κινεῖς μῦθον, 'move me to speak.'

91. αὐλίζομαι [αὐλή, 'courtyard'] 'to live.'

92. πίνος, 'filth.' βριθ- 'load.'

94. κερκίς, 'shuttle.'

96. φορουμένη, 'fetching home.' This translation gives the reflex force of the Middle.

97. ἀνέορτος [ἑορτή, 'feast'] ἱρῶν. This is gen. of want, just like χορῶν, especially common with negative adjectives.

98. 'Phrygian spoils' probably means gorgeous cushions and rugs. [Notice the anapaests in proper names in 98, 99.]

100. στατίζουσι, 'are stationed,' a more formal word than ἑστᾶσι.

101. Ἰδαῖα φάρη . . . 'their Trojan mantles clasped with golden pins.' The accus., as in 'suspensi loculos laevo,' 'os impressa toro,' &c. It is very common in Greek. The participle here may be either *middle* ('having clasped') or the elastic use of the *passive* with the objective accusative.

103. *σέσηπεν*, 'is rotting.' The blood will not sink into the ground: for it is murder, and calls for vengeance.

104. *πατρί*, dat. after *ταὐτά*, the usual idiom.

106. [*γαυρο-* 'exult,' *γαϝ* = exultation, joy, cf. gau-deo].

108. *κλῶν*, 'a branch.' [*κλάω*, 'to break'].

109. *χέρσος*, 'dry,' *i.e.* barren.

110. *μέθῃ βρεχθείς*, 'steeped in drunkenness.'

112. *λεύω*, 'to stone,' [root, *λαϝ-* lap- *λιθ-* 'stone]. *λάϊνος* is, of course, from the same.

115. *ἀπῶν*, Orestes. *ταῦτα* is cognate acc. 'such insults does he suffer.'

117. *i.e.* 'I appeal to you from my voice, heart, hands, grief, and my dead father at once—all these charge you, but only I am the channel.'
ἑρμηνεύς, 'interpreter.'

119. *ξυρῆκες* [*ξυρόν*, 'razor,' *ἀκ-* 'sharp'], 'shaven,' in mourning.

120. He is degenerate if he can't slay one man, when his father sacked Troy.

SCENE 3.

128. *τὸν ὄντα μῦθον*, 'the true tale,' *i.e.* the real reason.

131. 'To see the light,' a regular Greek phrase for to 'live.'

134. *φεύγων*, in its technical sense, 'in exile.'

137. *τὰ μέν*, 'some,' namely, her poverty.

146. *ἀκριβές*, 'certain,' 'no certain sign.'

147. *ταραγμόν*, 'confusion;' *i.e.* all criterions of worth are liable to error. He explains in the next line.

149. *τὸ μηδέν*, 'a cipher,' 'good for nothing.' 'To be naught' was used exactly in this way in the English of Shakespear.

150. *λιμόν*, 'famine,' a fine metaphor.

154. *ἢ τοῖς ἔχουσι μηδέν*; put by a regular Euripidean shifting or phrase for *τῷ ἔχειν μηδέν*. Thus it would be intelligible,

though inaccurate, in English to say, 'Can we tell the noble by *those who are poor*,' instead of saying, 'by poverty.'

155. *κακόν*, adject. expressing the *result* of the verb; this is called the Proleptic (anticipating) use of the adjective. Thus in English we say, 'I struck him dead.'

156. Strength is no test, any more than wealth.

158. Lit. 'It is best to leave these things alone, undecided. *εἰκῇ*, lit. 'at random,' 'uncertainly.'

160. *δόκησις*, 'reputation.'

162. *οὐ μὴ ἀφρονήσεθ'*, 'will you not cease from folly?

163. Sense: 'and will ye not judge men by their company, and worth by character,' (not by wealth or birth or externals).

165. *τοιοῦτοι*, 'the noble.'

67. *ἀγάλματ' ἀγορᾶς*, figure heads, as we say; fine externally, but soulless. Lit. 'adornments of the market-place.'
δόρυ μένει, 'withstands the battle.'
Even in battle it is courage, not strength, which wins.

170. 'This man's reception within his house.' *τοῦδ' ἀνδρός*, the ordinary gen. of the subject. *δόμων*, the specifying gen.

SCENE 4.

177. *ὀρθίαν*, 'steep,' for an old man. *ἔχει*, 'it has,' impers.

178. *ῥυσῷ* [*ῥυ-* draw], 'wrinkled.'

180. *διπλῆν ἄκανθαν*, 'bent spine' [lit. 'doubled], *ἄκανθα*, lit. 'a thorn,' and therefore embodies the same metaphor as the English word 'spine.'

183. *τρῦχος*, 'rags,' [*τρυ-* 'rub'].

185. *διάβροχος* [*βρεχ-* 'wet,' same stem as Lat. rig- and our 'rain'].

186. 'Have they reminded you' of past horrors.

189. *ἀνόνητα* [*ὀνε-* 'help,' 'profit'], 'in vain.'

190. Notice the double augment of *ἀνέχομαι.*
τοῦτό γ', 'this,' that I should let him lie there and not do my best for him.

191. *πάρεργ' ὁδοῦ*, 'by the way.' *πάρεργον* means prop. 'a secondary business,' and the accus. here is in apposition to the sentence, cf. 42.

194. *μυρσίνας*, 'myrtle boughs.'

195. *οἷς* = *ὅϝις* = ovis. *μελάγχιμος πόκῳ*, 'black in fleece,' the proper offering to the dead. *πόκῳ* dat. of reference.

197. *βόστρυχος*, 'a curl.'

203. *κούριμος*, 'shorn,' [*κερ-*].

204. 'Those that are of one father's blood are wont to resemble each other in most features of their body.'
φιλεῖ, often used for 'to be wont.'
ᾖ, subjunctive after indefinite *οἷς ἄν* in primary time.

209. *συμφέρομαι*, 'agree.'

210. 'The one trained in the manly wrestling-schools, the other combed as a woman's.'

212. *ὅμοπτέρους*, 'of like hair,' by a natural and pretty metaphor.

214. *ἀρβύλη*, 'sandal.' These two methods of recognition occur in the Choephoroe of Aeschylus; and this passage, though certainly forced and inappropriate as a sly satire on Aeschylus, is a striking example of Euripides' determined realism.

216. *κραταίλεως*, 'rugged,' 'rocky.' [*κρατ- λαϝ-*].

217. *ἔκμακτρον* [*μακ-* 'knead'], 'the print.'

219. Notice *ἄρσην* for *ὁ ἄρσην*.

223. Lit. 'to which of thy friends does this aged remnant of a man belong;' that is, 'who is it of thy friends.'

227. Notice the irony of *εἴπερ ἔστ' ἔτι*, said actually to Orestes.

228. 'Looking at the bright stamp of silver,' to see if the coin is genuine.

233. He entreats her to pray to the gods that she may receive the boon. He sees it is Orestes, but touchingly bids her pray first, and prove the reality of the joyful vision after.

243. *οὐλή*, 'scar.'
ἣν . . . ἠμάχθη, 'the wound that he received,' *ἣν* being really cognate accus.

247. *σύμβολον*, 'proof,' lit. 'a putting together.' We have the same obvious metaphor in English.

249. *ἐξ ἐμοῦ*, poet. for 'by me.'

252. *βόλος*, 'throw,' 'cast,' *i.e.*, the net with the fish inside.

SCENE 5.

257. *ἥλυθες* and *φονέᾶ* are rare, but can be illustrated from Eurip., cf. 358.

260. *i.e.*, 'are there any kind friends?'

261. *ἀνασκευάζω*, prop. 'to dismantle,' 'destroy,' 'break up.' [So it is specially used of bankrupts in Demosthenes.] Here simply, 'ruined.'

265. *εὕρημα* [lit. 'a find'], 'a rare thing.'

267. 'Thou art ruined utterly in friends.' *φίλοις*, dat. of reference.

271. *τοῦδε*, gen. of aim. *ἐξικνεῖσθαι*, 'to reach,' *i.e.*, 'hit the mark.'

272. *Θυέστου παῖς* is Aegisthus.

274. *οὐδ' ἄν . . .* [*λάβοις*].

275. *κέκασται* [stem *καδ-* obscure root, prob. connected with *κεδνός*, 'excellent,' and *κηδ-*] 'excels.' Only in Pf. Pass. A present, *καίνυμαι*, of different form is found.

276. *ἔγνως*, 'thou hast guessed.' cf. 55.

278. *εἰσῆλθε*, 'has occurred to me.'

282. *ὥπλίζετο*, by natural metaphor, 'he was preparing.'

234. *οἰκεία χείρ*, 'his own attendants.' *χείρ*, often so used of assistants, by very natural transference. So manus in Latin.

293. *συνίημι*, especially used of understanding *words*, or obscure signs; so of taking a hint or implied sarcasm. Note the participial construction with verbs of knowing; nominative (*οὖσα*) because it refers to the subject of *γιγνώσκει*.

297. *καὶ μήν*, (as usual) of a new point. 'Yes, and the other fortune will arrange.'

298. *δυοῖν ὄντοιν*, 'to us two,' lit. 'being two,' *ὤν* being constantly thus added to *numbers* (*εἷς ὤν*), where in English it is superfluous.

300. λεχώ [λεχ-, λεγ-, 'lie'], lit. 'a woman in childbirth.' 'Say that I am delivered of a son.'

302. *δέχ' ἡλίους*, for after ten days the sacrifice was offered to Artemis the deliverer (*εἰλείθυια*).

306. *ναί* is an answer to the sense rather than the grammar of the question. 'She does care.'
ἀξίωμα, 'the rank:' it was such a degradation that the blood of the Atridae should mingle with that of a husbandman.

307. 'Again I bring my word to the turning-post,' *i.e.*, again I ask, 'how will that effect her death?'

311. *ἔνθα*, 'where,' relative. The question is contained in the verb understood. 'Must I lead him where . . .?'

312. *τἀπ' ἐμοῦ* [*ἐπί*, not *ἀπό*], lit. 'what is upon me,' *i.e.*, 'my case.'

314. *πρόσθεν εἴληχας*, 'thou hast drawn the first lot,' *i.e.*, you must first execute your plot.

316. *πέμπω*, 'conduct:' it is used even of carrying a letter, in Iph. Taur., 604 (272 in 'Scenes').

317. *πατρῷε*, to avenge his father; *τροπαῖε*, to punish Aegisthus.

319. Notice the irony.

326. ἀκμή [ἀκ- 'point'], ''tis time,' lit. 'the point of time.'

327. πρὸς τάδ', lit. 'in view of these things,' = Lat. 'itaque.' 'And so I bid thee that Aegisthus die.'

328. πτῶμα after πεσεῖ, 'fall a deathly fall.' This is called cognate accusative; where the subst. describes the same act as the verb. Cf. 13, 115, 243, &c.

330. ἀμφήκει [ἀμφ- ακ-]. The γάρ is singularly misplaced here. Might we read ΓΑΡΗΙΙΑΡ for ΚΑΡΑΓΑΡ? Besides, the heart is more natural than the head.

331. 'Make it (ξίφος) ready.'

332. πύστις [πυθ-].

333. The ὀλολυγή was the cry of joy, as this shews.

336. πυρσεύω [πῦρ, 'fire'], by fine metaphor ('beacon') 'signal.'

340. ὑπέχειν δίκην, prop. 'to have to give account,' so, 'to submit.'

SCENE 6.

342. δοκώ, 'a fancy' [δοκ-].

344. πνεύματα, 'blasts,' by natural metaphor, of the shouting and tumult.

345. ἄμειψον, lit. 'change,' *i.e.*, 'pass,' 'leave,' 'come out.'

346. 'How have we progressed in our contest?' *i.e.*, 'how is our plot going on?' For gen. cf. 45.

349. ἐμφανής γε μήν, lit. 'clear, at least, however,' *i.e.*, 'but yet clear.' So γε μέντοι, γε μὲν δή are used.

350. Ἀργεῖος, delicately, to avoid mentioning Aegisthus' name.

351. μελος, 'strain.'

352. σφαγήν, &c., 'This thy tidings is death to me,' *i.e.*, 'I must slay myself,' as she vowed, 338. σφαγήν is the predicate to which τήνδε is attracted.

353. τρανῶς, 'clearly' [prob. from τρα-, 'pierce'].

355. φαῦλον, 'light,' 'easy.'

358. [*φονεᾶ*, 258.]

362. *δυσ-γνωσί-α*, 'difficulty of recognising.' 'I was slow to know.'

366. *ἦλθές ποτε*, 'thou hast come at last.' For the Greek tendency to the aorist if the thing is the least past, cf. 55, &c. See Index.

367. *ῥυθμὸς* [*ῥυ-*, flow], 'course.'

370. *δίκροτος ἁμαξιτός*. 'a chariot-road of double track,' *i.e.*, for two cars. *ἦμεν* [not *ἧμεν*, 385], from *εἶμι*, ibo.

372. *βεβώς*, 'walking,' part. (as usual) expressing *present state*.

373. *δρέπω*, 'pluck' [*δρεπ-δραχ-* grip, all the same stem]. *τέρην*, 'soft' [*τερ-* 'rub'].

381. *ἑῷοι*, 'in the morning.'

382. *ἐς ταὐτόν*, 'to the same place,' *i.e.*, to the river Alpheus, 376.

387. *χερ-νιβ-ες* [hand-wash], 'the lustral water.' But they had to be purified first by washing, cf. Iph. T. 1190-1.

391. *ἕτοιμος*, constantly without *εἰμί*, Aj. 813, O. T. 92.

392. *ἐκ μέσου*, 'in private,' like *ἐν μέσῳ*, 'in public.'

395. *σφαγεῖον*, 'vessel for blood.' *κανοῦν*, 'basket,' for meat, knife, &c.

397. *λέβης*, 'pot,' for boiling water.

398. *προχύται* [*κριθαί*], also called *οὐλαί*, the bruised barley sprinkled (with salt, mola salsa) on the victim's head before sacrifice.

400. *βουθυτεῖν* (Grant me) to . . . the regular infinitive of prayer.

402. *ὡς νῦν*; he means 'well.' But there is skilful irony in the unconscious words, with the avenger close at hand.

404. *γεγωνίσκων*, 'uttering aloud' [supposed to be onomatop (*i.e.*, formed from sound), from *γω*, exclamation, HO !].

406. *ὀρθήν*, 'straight' (not curved).
The process of sacrifice is told here with unusual fulness. The sacrificer wore a garland (373), purified himself and his assistants (386), then washed his hands with holy water (387), sprinkled the victim's head and altar with salt-meal (399), cut off a lock from its forehead [called also *κατάρχεσθαι*] (406), threw it into the fire (407), drew back its head and cut the throat (408), flayed and dissected it (419—421).

410. *ἐκ τῶν καλῶν . . . εἶναι τόδ'*, 'that this is one of their distinctions.' After this one expects infin. *ἀρταμεῖν*. But the change to the indefinite, *ὅστις ἀρταμεῖ*, is natural and common. Iph. Taur. 616.

411. *ἀρταμέω*, 'cut up' [deriv. unknown].

412. *ὀχμάζω*, 'curb' [lit. 'hold fast,' *ἐχ-*].

413. *ἔτυμος*, like *ἐτεός*, *ἐτήτυμος*, *ἐξ-ετάζω*, from old stem SAT, whence old English 'sooth.'

414. *Δωρίδα*, *i.e.*, *κοπίδα*, 432, 'a Doric' knife. The use of *local* adjectives as substantives is immensely common, cf. magnet, bayonet, cambric, damask, arras, gauze, sherry, port, quince, guinea, diaper, ermine, &c. (cf. Trench on "Study of Words," 122).

415. *πόρπαμα*, 'a clasped robe,' *πορπη* [*πέρ-* pierce], 'buckle.'

420. *δίαυλος* was the double lap of the race-course. (*ἱππίους*, because usually only horses raced *twice* over it). [From *αὐλός*, 'pipe' = 'double channel.'] *διήνυσε*, aorist of *habit*, 'accomplishes.'

421. *ἱρά*, 'the victim,' to see the omens. *ἀνεῖτο*, lit. 'relaxed,' *i.e.*, 'flayed,' 'stripped.'

422, sqq. *λόβος*, 'lobe' of the liver, whose absence was a fatal sign. *πύλαι*, the *portal* vein, leading to the gall-bladder, *δοχαί χολῆς*.

424. *προσβολάς*, 'attack.'

425. *σκυθράζω*, 'to look dark' [*σκυ- σκι-* shadow]. *δεσπότης* is, of course, Orestes.

426. Aegisthus answers, *ὀρρωδῶ* . . . [Lat. horreo]. *τί χρῆμ'*, 'why?'

430. *πευστηρίαν* [*θοίνην*, cognate acc.], *θοινασόμεσθα*, 'to feast—a feast of sacrificial inquiry' [*πυθ-*] seems the meaning: *i.e.*, to complete the sacrifice by fully examining the entrails, and so learning the gods' will.
ὅπως, with fut. is constantly nearly a final; here, as Ran. 1121, it is quite so.

431. *Φθιάδα*, from Phthia, S.E. of Thessaly, whence they professed to come, 376.

432. *χέλυς* [lit. 'tortoise' (cf. chelys, lyre made from shell); so from its shape], 'the chest.'

436. *σφονδύλους*, joints of the back-bone.

438. *ἀσπαίρω*, 'be convulsed,' *σφαδάζω* 'writhe,' both from stem *σπα-* cf. 'spasm.'
[*ἐσφάδαζε* is Valckenaer's bold correction of *ἠλάλαζε*, only used of joyful cries, 450.]

440. *μάχεσθα* inf. after *πολλοί*.

441. *ἀντίπρῳρα*, 'face to face,' 'before their faces.'

443. *ὀπάων* [*ἐπ-* 'follow'], 'attendants.'

447. *κάμακες*, prop. 'poles,' so 'spears.'

452. *αἷμα*, &c. 'And to the dead man now
Blood has been paid for blood, a bitter debt.'
δανεισμὸς is properly 'the loan.' The idea is of the loan coming back in the form of repayment.

SCENE 7.

456. *ἄνδημα* [*ἀνα-δέω*], 'band' or 'circlet.'

457. *ἑκπλέθρος*. 6 plethra = 200 yards.

460. *παρασπιστής* [*ἀσπίς*], 'comrade in war.'

468. *ὡς δέ τῷ* . . . . 'and that we may put before anyone, clearly to know this,' lit., *i.e.*, 'and to give clear proof of this.' [Paley's explanation of MSS. is perverse. *σαφ' εἰδέναι* must be *result* of *proof*, not of mere statement.]

471. *σκῦλον*, 'spoil.'

472. *σκόλοψ*, 'stake.'

475. *τί χρῆμα*; 'what' art thou ashamed to say? And the answer is *ὑβρίζειν*, clearly therefore alluding, not to Orestes' proposed treatment of the corpse, but to the desire for liberating her soul against Aegisthus by vindictive speech.

476. *φθόνος*. First 'envy,' 'jealousy.' Then it is used to describe the peculiar feeling of 'jealousy' supposed by Greeks to be felt by gods against those who were over-fortunate [cf. Polykrates] or those who misused their good luck. So the fear of this *φθόνος* would lead a person not to triumph over the fallen, as here. So Demosthenes uses it (327, 13) as deterring him from praising himself even as much as facts justify him in doing.

Here (as *τις* means men, not gods, cf. next line) the same feeling is extended to men, as naturally sympathising with the judgment of the gods.

478. *ἀρες-* 'please.' *ψεγ-* 'blame.'

479. *ἄσπονδος* [*σπονδαί*, 'a truce' (lit. 'libations')], 'implacable.'

483. *καὶ μήν* . . . *γε*, 'and yet truly.'

λιμπάνω, other method of strengthening stem (*λιπ-*) instead of the common *λείπω*. Cf. *φυγγάνω*, *φεύγω*.

492. *ἐς τοῦτο ἀμαθίας*, 'to such a pitch of folly.'

494. *ἐς σὲ μὲν δή*. You trusted the faith of a woman whose very faith to you was unfaithfulness to another! A fine sentiment, developed in the next four lines.

498. *ἐκεῖ*, towards her real husband. *οἵ* is the reflexive personal.

499. 'Most wretched was thy life, tho' men knew it not.'

503. *ὁ τῆς γυναικός.* As the French say of a man eclipsed by his wife, 'le mari de sa femme.'

508. *ἐπίσημα,* 'noble.' *μείζω,* 'above him' in rank.

509. *οὐδεὶς λόγος,* 'there is no talk of,' *i.e.*, he is of no account.

511. *τις εἶναι,* as we say, 'to be somebody.'

512. 'But they are nought, except to enjoy for a short while.'

515. *μετὰ σκαιῶν,* 'with evil men.'

516. Cf. 420.

517. *οὐδὲν εἰδώς,* for he is a lifeless corpse. [Paley has missed this.]

519. *βῆμα,* 'stage.'

521. *γραμμή,* 'the line' from which the race started and to which (as here) it returned.

The best instance of this well-known Greek sentiment is the end of Oedip. Tyrannus.

524. I have taken *μή σφ' ἴδῃ* (Seidler) for the awkward though possible *μὴ εἰσίδῃ.*

525. *i.e.* 'let us try some other means.'

529. *λαμπρύνεται,* 'she comes in state.' *λαμπρός,* 'bright.'

535. *ᾖ* indef. subj. without *ἄν* attached to *ὅπου,* as is usual.

536. *χράω,* 'to give an oracle.'

539. *μὴ ἀμύνων* contains a condition: 'if thou dost not aid the father.'

541. *οὐ πεσεῖ* would be 'wilt thou not fall' = 'fall.'

So *οὐ μὴ πεσεῖ,* 'wilt thou not refrain from falling' = 'don't fall.'

This is entirely different from the elliptical *οὐ μή* with the subjunctive. Cf. 162.

542. 'Shall I set the same snare for her?' *ὑποστήσω* may be fut. or delib. subj.

544. *πρόβλημα,* 'a task.'

546. *χἠδύ* = *καὶ ἡδύ.*

SCENE 8.

547. *ἀπήνη*, 'chariot.'

551. *ἐξαίρετα*, 'chosen spoils' which the king took.
παιδὸς ἣν ἀπώλεσα is Iphigenia who was sacrificed to the expedition.

555. The position of *μακαρίας* is unusual. It is outside the article and yet not a predicate. It seems possible (from one or two instances, Cho. 487, Orest 86, though both are doubtful) that this transposition was occasionally allowed in formal addresses, like the old English 'good my lord:' or possibly *μακαρίας* agrees with *σοῦ* understood from *σῆς*, like *τἀμὰ δυστήνου κακά*.

557. Electra's bitter answer is most telling. Clyt. repulses her filial offer by a cold 'Thank you, don't trouble: I have slaves.' Electra replies, 'Slaves? I am a slave too, outcast and orphan.'

560. 'Yet such was the cruelty of Agamemnon to Iphigenia.'

562. Sense: if it had been to save his city or other children [as Erechtheus sacrificed a daughter], it would have been excusable; but it was done for a frail woman and a feeble man.

565. *μάργος*, 'passionate,' 'weak.'

568. She puts a parallel case, with the sexes changed; and the absurdity of it is the measure of the injustice to women which prevails. 'For I (she thinks) should have been justly killed if I had done so; why not he?'

571. Ordex: *εἶτα οὐ χρῆν τὸν μὲν* (Agamemnon), *κτείναντα τἀμὰ θανεῖν*.

573. 'I turned that way (*ὁδὸν*), by which alone it was passable, namely, to his foes.' *ἥνπερ* is cognate acc.

576. *ἀντίθες*, *i.e.*, 'refute.' Lit. 'set [your arguments] against [mine].'

578. 'Just: but a wise [*φρενήρης- ἀρ-* 'fit,' lit. 'fitted with sense'] woman will not press for her rights.'

581. *οὐδ' εἰς ἀριθμὸν . . . λόγων*, lit. 'she does not even enter into the count of my words,' *i.e.*, 'I cannot take account of her.'

587. *φέρει*, as MSS., in spite of Porson's emendation, *φέρειν*.
ἄξιον, 'fit' praise [not ironical, as Paley]; but beauty is not all, and in character she and Helen were 'true sisters, both light women,' as Electra says.

592. *σκῆψις*, 'a pretext,' [lit. 'thing on which you lean.' Cf. *σκῆπτρον*].

593. 'They don't know you as I do.' [I have taken Porson's *ἴσασί σ' εὖ* for MSS., *ἴσασιν εὖ*. The acc. is necessary].

595. *νέον*, adv. 'recently.' Her husband gone, and her daughter sentenced to death, she occupies herself with—dressing her hair.

596. *ξανθόν*, 'yellow,' *κάτοπτρον*, 'a mirror.'

598. *ἐς κάλλος*, 'for beauty,' *i.e.*, to look beautiful.
διάγραφε, 'cancel,' 'cross out,' a fine word. She means, 'strike her off the list' as a bad woman.

602. *εἰ . . εὐτυχοῖ*, 'if ever . . . were fortunate,' equivalent to indefinite 'whenever,' as in all languages is possible and is common in Greek.

603. *ἥσσονα*, 'worsted.' Cf. *ἡσσᾶσθαι*.

605. *παρεῖχε* impers., 'it offered,' 'there was a chance.'
[so used absol. *καλῶς παρασχόν*. Thuc. 5, 14, &c.]
σωφρονεῖν (in its original sense of 'self-restraint') 'to be pure.'

610. *τὰ γὰρ κακά . . . . ἔχει*. Lit. 'Vice gives to virtue an example and a spectacle.' The meaning seems clear, though (as so often in Eurip.) the expression is a little confused. She means that an exposure of vice makes men study virtue, and point to it as an example.

611, sqq. The argument is: Even granted that Ag. had wronged you, why did not you content yourself with slaying him, and then give us our inheritance? Instead of this, you sold our portion to Aegisthus as the wages of sin.

614. *προσάπτω* (lit. 'to attach'), 'to bestow.'
ἀποφέρεσθαι, 'to gain,' with prop. mid. sense, 'to carry off for one's self.'

616. *ἀντιφεύγει*, 'is an exile in place of.'

618. *ἀδελφῆς*, gen. of comparison after *δὶς τόσως*.
She was 'twice as much slain as her sister,' because her honour was wounded by her marriage.

622. *ἢ εὖγ*, run into one syllable like *μὴ οὐ* and *μὴ εἰς-* in 524 [if we adopt the MSS. reading].

624. 'Better than a rich marriage is a lowly one, if pure.'

625. *πέφυκας*, c. inf., 'it is thy nature.' [Trach. 440.]

626. *ἔστιν δὲ καὶ τόδ'*, 'this too is found.' *εἰσὶν ἀρσένων*, 'take the side of the men' in the family.

629. *ἐμοί*, dat. of agent after pf. pass. as usual. The perfect suggests so much more the effect remaining (*for* the person) than the act done (*by* the person), that the Recipient Dative is the most natural case to use.

630. *πεπαυμένη*, 'recovered' from thy birth pangs.

636. *κομίζεσθαι* [to bring for one's self, 614], 'fetch home.'

639. *ἄγριον*, 'fierce.' Sense: Why have you not mollified him towards me?

640. *τρόποι*, 'his character.'
αὐθάδης [*αὐτός*, and *ἁδ-* stem *σϝαδ-* suavis, 'sweet'], 'self-willed.'

642. *καὶ μήν* (297). Assuring, 'and indeed.'

646. *οἶδα*, sc. *θῦσαι*, 'know how to sacrifice.' She explains, 648.

647. *δεκάτῃ*, 302.

648. *τρίβων* [root *τριβ-* 'rub'], 'practised.'

650. *βρέφος*, 'child.'

651. *ἱδρύω*, 'to settle' [root *ἑδ-* sed-]. It is regularly used in the passive, as here, with acc. probably cognate.
φίλων, gen. of want, after negative *ἀγείτονα*.

653. *ἀριθμόν*, 'to sacrifice (in honour of) the accomplished number of days,' probably *nine*, as Paley suggests; and so the tenth was the day of sacrifice. The acc. is again cognate.

657. *φάτναις*, 'the manger,' 'stable.' *ὄχους* is here used for the horses chiefly.

660. *μοι*, Ethical Dative, 'I beg.'

661. *αἰθαλόω*, 'soil,' 'blacken.' [*αἰθ-* 'burn,' *αἰθήρ*, *Αἰθίοψ*, *Αἴτνη*, aestus, &c.]

663. *ἐνάρχεσθαι κανοῦν* is 'to begin the offering by taking the barley (406 n.) from the basket.' Translate 'The sacrifice is begun, the blade is whetted.'

664. *ταῦρον* is Aegisthus.

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